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Mediatorial sovereignty

MEDIATORIAL SOVEREIGNTY.

MEDIATORIAL SOVEREIGNTY;

THE

MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE REVELATION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

BY

GEORGE STEWARD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PART II.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS.

The Origin of Christ's Prerogatives.

The last section will have shown the office of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Mediator. Viewed historically, his testimony through the Apostles is decisive of his regal function subordinately to the Christ, whether in the church, or in the world. He is commissioned to plant and uphold the kingdom of Jesus on the earth, and to exalt his name among men as their Lord and Saviour.

Apocalyptic representation of Christ's sovereignty.

It is further necessary to show, that the doctrine of the New Testament as contained in the Epistles, and in its one prophetic book the Apocalypse, bears out conclusively the preceding statements with respect to the sovereignty of the Mediator. In the Epistles this is declared in several very full and weighty passages;[1] in the Apocalypse it is sceni-

[1] 1 Cor. xv.; Phil. ii. 10; Eph. i. 22; Heb. i. 2.

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cally presented.[1] The opening chapter contains an august description of the appearance of Jesus as head of the Church, followed by a series of appropriate mandates addressed to the seven churches of Asia. These lead to the fifth chapter for the completion of the scenic revelations of his majesty as the Lamb upon the throne, invested with the dread prerogative of unfolding the mysteries of the sealed book. The preliminary vision shows Jesus to us rather as on earth, in the midst of the 'seven golden candlesticks.' He is the guardian Prince of the Church as it is *on earth*, walking in its midst as his chosen sanctuary, rather than in the temple, then, and for ever, forsaken. The subsequent vision of the Lamb on the throne shows him to us as he is *in heaven*, supreme over its entire hierarchy, and swaying in the name of the Father the sceptre of the universe.

These two views of Christ, so strikingly in accordance with the Old Testament descriptions of Jehovah's glory, will also be found to embrace the great doctrinal views of the New as to his mediatorial majesty. It is not needful here to turn to these severally with a view to their particular exposition, since they will more or less come under our observation when the teachings are adduced which, it is presumed, they contain, and which must be amplified proportionately to their importance. The course now indicated will include notices, somewhat extended, of the origin, nature, and extent of our Lord's power, its forms of administration, and its predestinated results.

The origin of Christ's sovereignty.

To begin with the question of the *origin* of this

[1] Rev. i. 10.

power: this will, on turning to the Scriptures, be found twofold. The primary ground of it is discovered when we look on the *divine*—the secondary, when we look on *the human side of it.*

Adopting this suggestion, it is pertinent here to confine ourselves to the *divine* side of this question; and with this intent, we offer a preliminary remark or two.

Personal distinctions in the Godhead fundamental to Christian theology.

(1.) It should be borne in mind, that the great fundamental to all Christian theology is the doctrine of the Trinity: no true views can be obtained of that theology, either as a system of facts or doctrines, if this be ignored, or obscurely held. This is particularly applicable to the doctrine of Christ's sovereignty as it appears throughout; and must be strictly applied when we endeavour to glance at its origin. The bare tenet of the Unity supplies no foundation for this doctrine, whether it be proposed in the form of common Unitarianism, or in that of the revived sabellian heresy. Personal distinctions in the Godhead are essential to our doctrine, inasmuch as it represents dominion as derived from one divine person to another; then as surrendered; and as finally resumed,—a notion at utter variance with that of a simple unity of the Godhead. In fact, the Unity is throughout Scripture dealt with as an assumption —seldom formally announced—never but when the related doctrine of personal distinctions renders this appropriate. It is never put forth by itself. In the New Testament particularly, this is constantly verified; as, indeed, it rules the *mode* in which the unity is presented to us, which is that of several persons or individual subsistences, bearing such titles,

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and performing such acts, as show an indissoluble relationship between them. Hence, there is not the slightest colour given throughout Scripture to the suspicion of its teaching Tritheism. All outgoing action from Deity is represented as emanating from the Persons after a certain fixed order, agreeably to the relations these bear to the Unity, and as reverting very specially in tendency and result to Him who represents the Unity—THE FATHER.

Bible teaching of God different in *kind* from that of Nature.

Hence, it will further appear, that the Scriptures not only give us a knowledge of God superior to that of nature and experience, but knowledge of a *different kind.* Attributes alone presupposing a substance to which they belong, are impressed on the Creation as it is open to us: *Personality is the grand discovery of the Bible—and personality so related to the agency of Deity as to indicate the rationale of all existence besides itself.* The origin and bearings of all things are to be referred to the *inter-personal relationships of Deity,—or to Persons possessing, and thus wielding divine attributes—not abstractedly to the attributes themselves.*

Accordingly, it is more proper to view Nature in God, than God in Nature,—to take his light as shed upon it immediately from himself, than as it is reflected from the mirror of Creation. As this is but the work of Deity, it can of itself imperfectly represent its Author, and be rightly construed only as it can be collated with a *prior* knowledge coming from God himself; just as the mind, in order to its judging truly of the general phenomena of Nature, must bring to it certain principles of its own. Knowledge is the product of the mind in converse with

the things opened to it, and depends on the degree in which these elements are respectively furnished. It is hardly to be supposed that mere Nature, whether within or without ourselves, was so framed as to exclude any higher source of knowledge than itself. It *presumes Revelation* rather *than otherwise as an original provision* for the instruction and happiness of man; and itself to be rather an *accessory to Revelation, than a fundamental, much less an exclusive, source of knowledge.*

The Trinity the key to the doctrine of Redemption

(2.) The scripture doctrine of the Godhead and its mode of agency, while it assures us that the universe must be a work in keeping with itself, and ultimately its perfected exhibition, is, more definitely, the key to the *whole doctrine of Redemption, and that of the Christ, in which this centres.* The personal relations of Deity to itself furnish *the principles or motives* to all its outgoings. This is the bond between the *ab intra* and the *ad extra*, of which the universe is the matter-of-fact exponent. The essential unity of the Persons implied in the relations, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, implies also their *moral and economic unity*, as their individuality does their ineffable *mutuality*, in which lies the profoundest mystery of the Godhead and its relations to the outlying universe.

The universe framed to unfold the divine nature through the personalities of the Godhead.

In this light, the universe appears to have been framed *to unfold the depths of the divine nature through the medium of its personalities*, of which the mystery of Redemption is the compendious, and, perhaps, the necessarily culminating example. That all divine manifestation has its outlet through the revealed relations of the Persons to each other; and that its end is attained in the appropriate glorifica-

tion of these; is the truth fundamental to the existence, condition, and destiny of all things, and consequently to every particular economy interwoven with their issues. This principle has ruled the creation, whether of matter or mind—their respective properties, relations, and workings; and it is brought out in the economy of Redemption, not as an unique instance of its operation, but as the highest demonstration of the *moral* glories of the Triune Name.

The Father represents the divine unity.

The substance of apostolic testimony in this direction, is this:—that the Father is the *representative* of the entire sovereignty in which the Persons severally hold fellowship,—that this sovereignty, very specially exercised in the mission of the Son to the world, involved the resignation to the Father of his sovereign rights, as a necessary preliminary to the work of Redemption,—and, that the Father, in token of his complacency in this work of the Son, has, in turn, and for a season, invested *him as Mediator with his own prerogatives* as 'Lord of heaven and earth.'

The Son the immediate source of creation and rule.

Thus it will appear that the filial character of the Eternal Word, and the Father's complacency in Him, supply the key to New Testament theology, particularly to the doctrine of mediatorial rule. The person of the Son, simply as such, is the fount of Creation and Government. The mid position of the Son with respect to the Father and the Holy Spirit, makes him the centre of the divine energy, and the proximate cause of all creature being and destiny. Mediatorial as well as creative fiats have all their common origin in him; and the Incarnation, with its endless train of wonders, becomes not

only a possibility, but historically a matter of fact. What might have been a derogation from, or an incongruity to the majesty of the Father, entirely befits the majesty of the Son, and peradventure was as necessary to the development of the glories of Deity, as to the well-being of the Creation as a whole. Not only does the Father find in the Son the sole medium for the outgoing of His glories to the universe, but *in the Son himself the sole motive for this outgoing.* The universe has no more its reasons than it has its existence *in itself:* both are in the Son. As springing from the Son, it not only bears his impress, but it reflects the Father's complacency in him.

Mediation in keeping with the personality of the Son.

As the whole system is 'by Him and for Him,' Mediation, which sets Him at the head of it, holding a creature relation and correspondence with it, is in perfect keeping with his divine nature and prerogatives. 'The government,' *executively*, appertains to him *as the Son;* and his human relation, with all that this has given birth to, is to be viewed as opening out a richer field for the display of his Sonship as the administrator of the Father's purposes.

The appointment to the office of Mediator belongs to the Father; the performance of mediatorial conditions belongs to the Son. Complacent, self-ruled submission, was His, who, having resigned *his regal estate to the Father*, became what naturally he was not—'His Servant'—'being made in the likeness of men.' The outstepping from the bosom of the Father, and the glory appropriate to Deity, in order to assume a creature alliance, was an act which St Paul might well describe as one of self-exinani-

tion; while the 'death of the cross,' viewed as its culmination, disclosed not only the nature of the purpose, but the depth of the principle that led to it. The glory redounding to the Father in this submission of the Son 'passeth knowledge,' whether we regard the range of the results, or the nature of the means devised for producing them. It was for the Son to compass his end by exhausting all the conditions of creature life in union with his own divine perfections. 'The joy set before him' in this career of humbled majesty was nothing less than the Alpha and Omega of all created being. Its entire scale lay within the purposes of his office as the Image and Executive of the Father.

How the Son is capable of exaltation by the Father.

This altered personal estate of the Son, which implied the resignation of his monarchic honours, and the susception of a creature position, in order to the prosecution of his mediatorial work, enables us to perceive how he, as the Son, *could be capable of exaltation by the Father* when his work on earth was accomplished, *and in what that exaltation consisted.* This consisted *in restoration to his own regal honours as the Son,*—'the glory which he had with the Father before the world was,'—*and in the ineffable superaddition of the Father's regal glory to his own,* implied in the expression, that 'he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.'

This is our Lord's peculiar glory in his estate of God-man, or Lord; and this is his reward from the Father. *The Son wields the Father's sceptre.* Dominion has passed from the first to the second Person in the Holy Trinity; and it implies not only that 'all things are put under his feet,' but that all the glories of the Godhead are concentrated in

his office, and find their outgoing and their return through him alone. Nothing short of this high supremacy of the Son can be meant by those scriptures which declare that all things are 'given into his hands'—that 'he is excepted who put all things under him'—that 'the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth'—that 'the Son quickeneth whom he will'—and finally, that 'all judgment is committed to the Son,' 'that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.'

The Father's ordinances rendered through the Son.

Such is the scripturally declared altitude and scope of mediatorial prerogative, and such the scripturally declared doctrine of its origin. Agreeably to this, it comes to pass, that all the manifestations of the Father are by the Son; and that He is represented and recognised solely in his person and office. The Father is, personally considered, more remote from the creatures, and governs and disposes all things through the Son. He is not otherwise accessible; nor is worship, whether in earth or heaven, to Him well-pleasing, but as it comes to Him through this channel. *From* the Father every ordinance goes forth *through* the Son to the creatures; while everything he does bears on it the stamp of absoluteness and finality. It is the Son's prerogative to take the book, and unloose the seals thereof, to render all decrees into acts, and to bring out the response of the Universe to the Throne in the eternal anthem of destiny.

The Divine Unity not impaired.

(3.) It will be seen that this doctrine of mediatorial supremacy does not in the least tend to impair the *unity of the Divine Monarchy*. It is true that this monarchy is, for a season, invested solely

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in the Son, and that it really is, in opposition to sabellian and humanitarian theories, an independent form of that monarchy, *held by one Person only.* But this form is derived to the Son from the Father; it reposes on personal relations and personal fellowships; and it is given and received on such grounds as secure the personal honours due to each, and reflect immeasurable glory on the Godhead. 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' not only without 'robbery,' but 'to the glory of God the Father.' Whatever highness the Son has, he has it from the Father, and for the co-equal demonstration of His glory who bestows, and His who receives it; since it is manifestly incommunicable to a creature, and appropriate only to the Almighty's 'Fellow.'

The sovereignty of the Son rests on personal relations.

Hence, the constant tenor of scripture statement on this subject strikingly identifies the Mediator's Godhead with his office as supreme Lord of the universe. Thus (not to refer again to our Lord's own words), the passage in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians especially identifies the dominion of Christ with his personal majesty as the Son: 'When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under him.' Thus also in the Colossians, 'the Image of the invisible God' is the Being who in all things has 'the pre-eminence.' And thus, too, in the first chapter of the Hebrews: 'Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, . . . after he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high:' while the residue of this sublime scripture is an argument for the divine majesty of the Mediator, drawn from the force of this incom-

municable name, Son, and its recognition by the oracles of the Father, and by investiture with a Lordship of proportionate prerogative and honour: 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;' and, 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth.'

The terminableness of mediatorial sway.

(4.) These views also suggest to us the *terminableness* of mediatorial sway. This is not a mere inference from the nature of such a system in its *creature* aspects (a point afterwards to be noticed), but a result insured by the relations of the divine persons toward each other implied in this economy. The Father's prerogatives are given to the Son, not wielded by Himself. This is not their original condition: they are devolved on the Son to effect certain objects of paramount interest, which must, therefore, in due time be consummated. Then they will revert to the Father, with the augmented glory which the Son's work will have cast upon them. The glory of the Father is pre-eminently the end of the universe, and that of the Son and of the Spirit also in the entire compass of their economic agencies. Not only is the mystery of all things consummated in this manifestation of the Father's Godhead by the Son, but a glimpse given to creatures into the awful mystery of the INFINITE AND THE ETERNAL.

The origin of mediatorial power from the human side.

The *human* side of the origin of mediatorial power remains to be opened. Here its aspect is equally interesting, and more within our view. It is to be presumed, that whatever is said of the Humanity of the Mediator must be understood, not as apart from, but in its personal relation to him as the Son, and thus as a component of the Son himself. The

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mystery of the Christ, as unfolded in Scripture by his attributes and acts, reposes on the doctrine of the compatibility of the union of the human and the divine natures to this extent, that they may be regarded as *but one Person.* As the Deity, in order to such an union, must assume a new *relative* position toward the creature, so the Humanity must for the same reason be supposed taken out of the ordinary relations of its kind. Without its *nature* undergoing any change from this cause, its *position* must be incalculably advanced. It is made sacred, and, *in this relative sense*, divine, by this association. Obviously promoted to *the headship of all creatures*, it must have inherent in it, as the Lord's own humanity, such a supremacy as is inseparable from *his own Person.*

The acts of Christ officially perfect because they partake of a double nature in personal unity.

Hence, the acts of such a Person, viewed entirely on the human side, partake the glory of his higher nature ; and their *official perfectness* lies in the fact, that they are the products not of one nature only, but of both in personal conjunction. To hunger and thirst, to be weak and weary, to do, to suffer, and to die, are purely human ascriptions ; but they take their moral significance from the Person of the Agent of whom they are affirmed, even though we suppose that his Deity throughout his history was but partially concerned in them. In that history, his Godhead undoubtedly was, to a great extent, passive ; and was in all cases regulated in its outgoing *by the human conditions of his existence.* The divine was ruled by the human, rather than the human by the divine.

Accordingly, we find the acts and sufferings of the Mediator ascribed to his *entire Person*, and not

The divine and human in Christ never separated in Scripture.

to one or other of his natures. Sometimes the view of the Divinity, sometimes that of the Humanity, preponderates; but they are never *separated.* Without the slightest attempt at analysis, we find the language of Scripture adopting this broad and intelligible basis: the God or the Man is not spoken of as doing or suffering this or that, but the *Person* called Jesus, or the Christ. 'The Lord of Glory' is said to have been 'crucified;' 'the Lord' to have purchased the Church 'with his own blood;' and 'by Himself' to have 'purged our sins;' who sat down 'at the right hand of the Majesty on high.'

The counsel of the Father respecting the Son's office, implying his relation to creatures of some one order, and the human being so chosen, it follows, that the acts arising from this relation, and the moral condition of the creatures so represented, should be imputed to his *Person;* and that they should redound to that Person in the form of a reward, crowning the human nature when thus exalted, to the glory of the divine.

The Atonement the moral issue of this double nature.

Now, while the merits of a whole course of obedience immeasurably perfect should attach to its parts severally, *the one act which crowned the whole, and to which all the others stood but in the order of means, should be the basis of official glory.* Such is THE ATONEMENT; for it is the one moral issue of this wonderful union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. Assuming the essentially penal nature of sin as the transgression of the Law, and its universality in man; the atonement is founded in the federal constitution of his race, through which sin has become a race-

fact, and thus supplies the counterpart in the work of A SIN-BEARING RACE-SUFFERER of answerable perfections, and divinely appointed for this intent. Such is the aspect of the Atonement toward the world. In its diviner aspect, it discovers the counterpart to the moral administration, regarded as simply normal, by the exceptional and peculiar relation of the Lawgiver, personally considered, to his own law, by means of which his character is more gloriously illustrated than by the course of his government under ordinary conditions. His own *self-ruled subjection to law as the* INFINITE, inconceivably transcends the collective homage which the universe could pay to it; while as to the creatures, the direct action of law upon them in the form of penalty, though by this interposition suspended, the law itself remains unimpaired, and is made capable of a far wider range of wise and beneficent results.

It exhibits the relations of the INFINITE to Law.

The Atonement is the immediate source of power to the Mediator officially, because it is the offspring of the highest personal resources applied to one act, though that act was passive, and those resources were expended in blood. The Cross is the basis of the Mediator's throne, and THE LAMB the symbol of the past and the future of the universe. The wondrous Person so designated, embodies every principle of the divine government traceable throughout its history, and every principle in the divine nature from which this has emanated. The Godhead and the Universe *relatively* include nothing more than the Cross. In this sense, it is the summary of both, and its development the course of time and eternity.

The Cross, the basis of the divine government.

Obviously, whatever constitutes the basis of dominion must be the principle of its administration, which is conducted solely with a view to secure its results, and thus to glorify its power. As he is the Alpha and the Omega, supremacy must belong to that which *he* holds forth as the very source and substance of his glory. To do otherwise, would be to deny himself, and to undo his own work. His throne would fail to be the exponent of its own principles, and an intelligent monument of its own origin. His throne is, in fact, the means to glorify his Cross, by interweaving it with the entire course of an administration formally committed to this end.

The Throne of Christ the necessary sequel to the Cross.

The Cross is to be borne onward, and onward, in the flow of duration by the fiats of 'the Throne,' and before the eye of the universe. Every ray of heaven's glory attests its affluence, every ministry is charged with its service, and every event on the vast fields of existence bears its image and superscription. 'The Throne' is the seat of its glory, the measure of its perfections, and the guardian of its honours. But for 'the Throne,' the Cross would for ever have been, not a mystery, but an enigma to the universe—isolated and inaccessible—a fact without antecedents or consequents—its glory pent up, and its fruitfulness stayed, by which all things were to be replenished and perfected. Now the mystery of the Cross, instead of darkening, illumines all things, and radiates through heights and depths the most remote from its own pavilion. The voice of the Lamb is heard on high over all the sons of light; its thunders scare the rebel hosts; and its vials, charged with flaming wrath, are poured into the seats of wickedness, whether in earth or

hell; while its grace, gentle as the dew, falls on the hills of Zion, and life and joy spring up responsive 'as willows by the water-courses.'

'The Throne' cannot but be the sequel of the Cross, since ascendancy is due to moral greatness, and is the position proper to attest this truth, on which the stability of the universe depends. The history of actions is but the history of principles; and those which God unfolds as the highest in His character, and as essential to His nature, are those which form the soul of His government, and to which all creatures must do homage.

Christ adored as the Lamb slain.

The scriptures which connect the exaltation of Christ with his cross, are too numerous and familiar to require separate notice; and we are content with those passages in the Apocalypse which ascribe to him worthiness as the 'Lamb' 'slain,' to receive worship from the universe; because these do, in fact, but recapitulate the general testimony of Scripture on this point, while they present it in the most vivid form. Thus, 'They sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to unloose the seals thereof: for thou wast slain;'[1] and again, 'Every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that is in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.'[2]

Thus the ground on which this supreme homage is tendered to the Lamb simply is, that it is his due, because he was 'slain,' and by his death has accomplished human redemption. This, in other

[1] Rev. v. 9. [2] Rev. v. 13.

words, is to declare the supremacy of the Cross, and the obligation of all creatures to do it homage. This homage is not explicitly tendered to Christ as the Son, whose throne, *as God*, 'is for ever and ever;' much less is it tendered to him as 'the Son of Man:' it is tendered to him AS THE LAMB, showing that pre-eminently official homage is rendered to him, and personal, but *indirectly*—homage put, not on what he is, but on what he has done: 'Thou wast slain.' All his *essential* glories are blended with those of his Cross, which is seen to be the immediate basis of his supremacy, and the complement to his claims to adoration from the universe. He is 'worthy' to receive this as the Lamb, just as in the preceding chapters God is declared 'worthy' to receive it as the Creator—that is, because all that he is, and all that he does, render this his inalienable right.

Thus supreme worship is the universal tribute due to the Lamb—it is his official revenue from all creatures, but especially from redeemed men. With this glory and honour he is crowned 'for the suffering of death;' and this must be understood as due to him in his Person without separating the natures which it combines: it is offered to him in his character as Lord—a term which includes his every attribute of nature and of office.

The administration of Christ the correlative of his atonement.

This connection between the cross and the throne of Christ, not merely asserted but dwelt upon by the Scriptures, is the most emphatic voucher for the reality and glory of the Atonement; for it asserts against all impertinent cavils, or grave theories in opposition to it, that the Atonement is, as a revealed

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fact, the basis of the government of the world. For as, in fair theological construction, no other doctrine than that of atonement could be meant by the term 'Lamb' as applied to Christ, so, if we accept the Scriptures, no other reason exists either for the worship or the administration of Christ, than what is involved in this same term 'the Lamb.' All theories, therefore, which reject or supersede the Atonement, leave both the one and the other without a plausible, not to say a sufficient, foundation. It may be inquired too—with respect to such theories as resolve the whole person and character of Christ simply into a moral manifestation of God in harmony with human nature and for its relief, and which maintain the contrariety of the doctrine of atonement to the justice and goodness of God; to the proper moral status of a supposed substitute; and the opposition of a religion founded on it to our moral sentiments,—how it is possible that a religion can be true which ignores the righteousness of the Moral Governor, and which bases a remedial system on *one principle only*—that of benevolence or love. It may be absolutely affirmed, that from a solution of the question which involves a dealing with moral evil, it is impossible to shut out the attribute of justice, and to maintain the sufficiency of benevolence alone for this purpose. The question cannot be thus approached: the assumption is founded in falsehood as it respects the character of God, and equally in falsehood as it respects the character of man. This doctrine of benevolence thus includes a double fallacy; nor is there any possible way of escaping from it, however persistently it may be combated, but by the

admission of the doctrine of atonement. The same difficulty stands in the way of initiating a system of recovery practically effective which excludes from man's conscience the sense of sin, and of the desert and the dread of penalty, and from his return to God the sense corresponding with the fact of his 'salvation.'

The historical and spiritual in religion the revelation of the Atonement.

It is further added as corroborative of these views, that, whilst the general facts of Christianity take their place in the world as matters of history, the death of Christ as an atonement for sin is taken out of this merely historical category, and presented by the Gospel to the individual conscience of the world, as an actual provision for individual need; and that personal redemption is also made a fact of consciousness in attestation of its all-sufficient power. In a word, the religion of a disciple is by the Atonement made to embrace at once the compendium of the evangelical history, and the realities of the unseen world. The Atonement and its administration are the ever continued verification of these two great constituents of evangelical religion.

Christ worshipped in his Person human and divine.

This reference to the person of Christ as the object of supreme adoration shows that, while the natures in him are not convertible, but must for ever maintain their disparity as human and divine, their personal relation may make *the imputation* far otherwise. The divine nature is worshipped in the human, and the human in the divine: the relation, in this instance, of the lower to the higher taking it out of the category of creature being, just as the work to be effected by this combination is imputed to the *Lord*, though the humanity was

concerned in its accomplishment. The homage rendered is just as broad as the work accomplished: 'For the suffering of death, he is crowned with glory and honour,' and 'the Elders, and the four beasts, fall down before *the Lamb*.'

Hence, the Man Christ Jesus is, in the 2d chapter of Hebrews, represented as set over the works of God, and over 'the world to come' as well as the world that now is, rather than the Angels. Nor can the language of the Psalm just quoted be otherwise seen as applicable to the Apostle's purpose, which is to show the superior honour put upon the human nature above the angelic; which assuredly breaks down, if in this Psalm he had understood its theme to be the divine government, administered to the exclusion of all creature participation. *This is true of the government of the Father only—not of that of the Son*, which is initial, and intermediate; and which, in order to secure the highest glory to the former, does, as matter of fact, admit, *in the person of its head, creature participation.* It is founded on creature assumption, on creature relations, and on creature action. This, the whole scheme of Revelation, and particularly the facts of the New Testament, demonstrate. Without these, it were impossible that government *of this kind should exist:* its very origin involves this mysterious peculiarity, whether man or any other creature had been selected for this honour. The adoption of this alliance carries with it this wonderful creature supremacy. *The Lamb is the representative of God and the Universe.* His person and work are the bond which unites them together; while the homage rendered to him is, in the highest sense, homage

The government of the Father excludes creature participation.

Creature fellowship not excluded from the government of the Son.

rendered to the Father who has put this honour upon him.

No idolatry in this elevation of the creature nature.

In this, however, there is no germ of idolatry. As there is but one Person—'the only begotten of the Father'—capable of forming such an alliance, and but one Lord who by original right could be eligible to the office and condition of a Mediator, so is this promotion of the creature *absolutely limited to him* 'in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' It is impossible that there should be a *second example* of such a dignity, much less a multitude of them. In this sense, our Lord's own words are strictly applicable to his office—'I am the First, and also the Last.' As it has 'pleased the Father that in him (as his Son incarnate) should all fulness dwell,' it has also pleased him that a correspondent fulness of homage should be accorded to him in this new and complex character; and that that blessing and honour which are appropriate ascriptions of loyalty to Him that sits upon the Throne, should also be rendered to 'the Lamb, for ever and ever.'

The mutual offices of the divine and human nature of Christ.

These observations on the joint supremacy of the Humanity and the Divinity in the person of Christ, suggest the question of the mutual offices of the two natures in *the administration* of the economy which their personal union has originated. It is conceded that the natures, *individually*, are as distinct in their attributes as if they stood apart, or in ordinary relations—that the Godhead can neither become human, nor the human divine. Inexpressibly exalted as the human is by its union with the divine, it is still but glorified man: it cannot be omnipotent, or omnipresent. Its knowledge

cannot be infinite, nor its resources self-sufficient: it is still but human nature—man, and not God—and must so remain for ever.

What glory, then, can be added to it by its personal relation to Deity? or what may be its administrative functions in harmony with such an alliance? If we contemplate such an answer to these queries as is not inconsistent with our ignorance and frailty, let us keep close to the statements of Scripture; when, though what may be advanced goes but a little way into such a subject, nothing may be hazarded far astray from the words of truth and soberness.

Let it then be noted, that the New Testament uniformly speaks of the Christ as a Sovereign personally ubiquitous. The words of Jesus himself teem with the doctrine of what we may call his official, in distinction from his personal, divinity. He promises rest to the heavy laden—to feed his people with his very flesh and blood—to dwell in them, and they in him. He engages to be with his servants to the end of the world, and to be in the midst of the smallest assemblies of his disciples, wherever congregated. Apostolic language also implies the same doctrine. Men are said, on believing, to be 'in Christ;' he is said to be 'formed' in them, and they to be 'filled' with him; while, in the opening of the Apocalypse, as 'the Son of Man' he is seen enthroned in the midst of the 'golden candlesticks,' and holding the 'seven stars' in his right hand.

The communicableness of the humanity of Christ.

The gist of all these teachings is, undoubtedly, the divine majesty of the Christ: they agree in setting forth *the administrative communicableness of*

the personal Christ. They are based upon the truth of the *virtual presence of his Humanity*, wherever, and in whatever acts, *his Godhead is revealed.* The human nature is, though inexplicably, *represented and communicated* by the divine. It is not 'the Son' merely who operates, but the God-man. Virtually, as well as relatively, the Humanity travels with the Godhead, and is imparted by it. *In operation*, the Godhead is so far humanized as to become to us what it could not have been in any other person, any more than 'the glory of the Only Begotten' could have been seen, as John says, 'full of grace and truth,' had not the 'Word been made flesh.' *Officially*, though *not essentially*, there is a convertibleness in the natures of the Person uniting them; nor is the least reservation countenanced by Scripture in invocation, trust, love, as if the entire Christ were not present with us, to receive our homage, and to return it, by the fullest verification of this profound reality.

The human sympathies of Christ a part of his redemptional perfections.

Then, too, we are reminded how the *sympathies* of Jesus, which he displayed on earth, are ascribed to him in his divine form of exaltation. He is said to be 'touched with a feeling of our infirmities;' that having 'been tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted:'[1] which expressions, and others like them, mean little, unless these experiences are perpetuated in his divine humanity, and do actually flow out of it, so as to reach the subjects of trial in their utmost depths of need. Nor is the duty pertinently enforced, of coming 'boldly to the throne of grace,' unless there be an infinite reality in the alleged correspondence of the

[1] Heb. iv. 15, ii. 18.

humanity of Jesus with those who appeal to him for succour.

In truth, the perfection ascribed to him of an official sort, and attained by him through suffering, must very mainly be understood as lying in the wondrous combination of the human sympathies thus acquired with the depths of his divinity, rendering their active results matters of Christian experience. The *compatibleness* of these representations is an inference from the *truth* of Scripture, and is no deduction or intuition of our reason; but on this foundation it rests securely. For if our reason at best can do little to yield them evidence, it has still less to offer against them. 'The deep things of God' (of which assuredly this is one of the deepest), as they are all *revealed*, may well give forth their warning to mortals how near they approach, lest they be swallowed up in the abyss of the faith, and impiety reach its doom in the bottomless mysteries of the very 'wells of salvation.'

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS.

The Dominion of Christ—Universal.

By him all things consist.

In the first chapter of Colossians an expression occurs so big with suggestion, and so consonant with the subject before us, that it may be adopted as including all the leading aspects of mediation, whether pertaining to the church or the universe: 'By him all things consist.' This is said, indeed, of Christ, primarily, as the Creator; for it immediately follows the testimony, that 'by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth;'[1] and also, that 'he is before all things,' as indeed he must be, if he made all things,' and if we are not to understand these words rather of priority of position than of existence. This sense is perhaps to be preferred, when taken in connection with the words immediately following,—'and by him all things consist;' that is, are disposed into a system—universally marshalled into order after an ideal of which he is the author, as well as for ends which he himself has purposed. All this, undoubtedly, speaks for personal majesty, rather than for mere priority of being. The phrase includes both the origin and actuation of all things by Christ, and with a view

[1] Col. i. 16.

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to HIMSELF as their end: 'All things were created by him and for him.'

Mainly in his office as Mediator.

The two grand doctrines which spring out of this statement, 'By him all things consist,' are, first, that all things are disposed as well as originated by Christ; and secondly, that, strictly relating to him as their end, they are designed to illustrate his mediatorial office.

The entire section is prefaced by the doctrine of redemption and the kingdom of the Son, and winds up with his honours as 'the head of the body the Church,' and with the appended notice of design by the Father, 'that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.' Hence it follows, that whatever is said of the Son as the Creator, Disposer, and End of all things, relates to him very mainly in his mediatorial office, and must be understood as preparatory to and included in it.

The first doctrine, then, found in the statement of St Paul, is, that all things are by the Son disposed and maintained in one system, whether 'things in heaven, or things on earth, visible or invisible.' In fact, all things, as thus set forth, include both the material universe, the human race, and all orders of spiritual being lying beyond. In this statement—that they all 'consist,' or stand together, by Christ—is clearly implied their entire ideal and structural unity, their essential relationships and mutual dependence. The lines from one grand personal centre radiate to every point of the vast circumference, by which are circumscribed all the realms of material and spiritual nature.

The one idea of consisting in Christ, is all-ruling

throughout the universe. It determines the elements and properties resident in matter, the laws by which they combine, and the effects they are designed to produce. Figure, magnitude, and other properties of bodies, have not only their consistency with an ambient space, but with the laws and forces which insure the *harmony* of bodies, whether great or small. The most subtle and invisible substances are consistent with the grossest, and as essential to the perfection of the whole as those which form the outline and mass of things.

The whole *system* of nature in his hand.

As far as Nature is opened up to us, the doctrine of *system* universally prevails; and the perfection with which this idea is embodied in detail, as well as its boundless ramifications, may well overwhelm us with surprise. The doctrine is as thoroughly exemplified in each particular, as it is in the stupendous whole. The relations of other worlds to ours, and of our world to them, are just as patent as those that regulate its internal economy. These have been built up into a system by human observation and sagacity. Ours is but a member of a family of worlds owning the solar monarchy; nor is there the least reason to believe that system stops here. Facts, even as we know them, warrant the conclusion that it is absolutely universal, and inlaid in the very existence of matter.

The most notable instance of this doctrine, however, appears in man: to *his* nature *external* nature is exquisitely adjusted, and all its arrangements manifestly presuppose him. The world may be said to 'consist' with man. But the highest example of this truth is found in man's constitution as a mixture of the rational with the animal, and thus

All adjusted to the complex nature of man.

a paradigm of earth and heaven. It is shown in him that these two utterly dissimilar natures can 'consist,' and their union be made productive of marvellous results. The range of such a creature beyond one possessed of either nature *alone*, must be incalculable: it has fellowship with both the grand divisions of the universe. Springing out of the dust, it mounts up to God.

The conclusion we adopt as to the universal systematization of matter, is applicable to the relations subsisting between matter and mind, though we are unable to trace it beyond our own nature and its surrounding sphere. Whether the notion held by some philosophers, of its combination with all spiritual existences except the Deity, be true or false, it is far from inconceivable that the material system as a whole, bears a close, and perhaps indispensable, relation to the development of mind. Though its combination should not in all cases be personal, its objective correspondence may still be possible, and its influence necessary. *Embodiment* may be but one of many methods which open out avenues from the spiritual to the material universe. The very fact of the union of these substances in man is indicative of some essential adaptability to this correspondence in both; while that of their common origin from a Being purely spiritual confirms, if it fails to prove, this presumption.

Mind and matter counterparts of one system.

In truth, when considered, these natures appear to be the proper counterparts of one grand and all-perfect system, answering to one another much as they do in human nature itself. Perhaps, the existence of a material system was necessary to demonstrate, as it certainly was to illustrate, the all-

sufficiency of Deity in such a way as the production of merely spiritual natures could not do,—namely, to solve the question of the possibility of *a creation out of nothing*, as distinguished from a *generation* or emanation of beings from Himself. The creation of matter has afforded a field for the perfections of Deity dissimilar to and apart from his own essence —extended, so as to be observed—multiform, so as to abound in proofs of design—and dependent, so as to exhibit sovereignty on the widest scale, tracing out its purposes through long epochs of time, and accomplishing these by procedures wonderfully slow and elaborate.

For this and other reasons, a universe external to mind seems to have been indispensable to the idea of creation: not to add, that for aught we know, such a system might be indispensable to the education of mind, both intellectually and morally considered. To man, at least, this course of tuition is necessary; nor shall we perhaps go far astray, if we conclude that it is equally applicable to the history of all finite intelligence whatever.

Mind as truly subject to government as matter.

This doctrine may be extended to *the moral*, as well as the physical universe. The idea of *government* is, indeed, very strongly expressed in the terms employed by the Apostle to describe the intelligent universe: 'whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers.' Here are notices of *systems* of government altogether apart from the sphere of our own race. The teaching seems to imply that mind as well as matter is grouped into systems, which admit every variety in their forms of administration. The variety employed in the choice of terms to convey the doctrine

shows this. Thus mind is made to 'consist' with mind, as well as mind to 'consist' with matter: all these different orders of being are under rule. Supremacy and subordination are the cardinal principles on which the spiritual universe turns. Individual independence and absolute self-rule are anomalous to that universe which consists by Christ. *Mind is essentially social and relative in its very constitution.* Angels are a 'host'—men a race. They are made to represent *systems*, not *individuals;* and to derive their perfection as well as their ends from their fellowship with congeneric beings. Hence, the laws of relation which bind one being to another, are those which harmonize individual with public happiness. As the importance of a figure, as it stands in an account, is ruled by its relation to others and not by itself; so is individual being to be taken *positionally* rather than *abstractedly*, or as an item in the whole. These relative aspects of mind to its own self-aggregate, must imply a *moral nature*, and *a moral system.*

The principle of this government laid in the moral nature.

All forms of human polity and of mental association throughout the universe presuppose the existence of a moral government, and are, in fact, examples of it. Authority and subjection are moral ideas, as involving those of right and obligation, of sovereignty and service; so that, wherever they exist, we discover in the workings of intelligent natures the reflex and counterpart of that higher law which immediately binds the moral system to its Author.

All order and stability in the intelligent universe are founded in its *moral constitution.* Truth, rectitude, goodness, wisdom, holiness, are the necessary elements of order and happiness, as their antagonists

are of disorder and ruin. Even apart from the doctrine of a *direct* rule of God over such a system, upholding it by the sanctions of rewards and penalties, *the principles of such a rule are inlaid in a moral nature*, and can never be extinct, however warred against, and practically deposed. Reason, will, and conscience, cannot have been endowments isolated from law and righteousness, which, as subsisting in God, must be embodied in his government. If the physical universe be made by Christ to stand together, and to co-operate for its own conservation, by means of constituent forces therein deposited as vehicles of his power, and ordinances of his will; much more may the moral system be supposed to 'consist' by him in virtue of the moral powers innate in mind itself, and of the direct legislative relations which it holds to him as its author and end. The moral universe is immeasurably higher than the physical, and, as the reflected image of God, must repose on principles proportionably simple, unchangeable, and necessary. Here, at least, there can be 'no shadow of turning.' Good and evil are the fixed and essential issues of a system presupposed, not only by the existence of moral agents, but by that of God himself; and the whole range of moral liberty conceded to such beings, is simply bounded by *an alternative* which makes them the arbiters of their own destiny. The action of moral beings can, in no cases, disturb the laws of the system to which they belong, much less shift the foundations of it; it can only alter the aspects of it *toward themselves.*

Self-rule anomalous.

As there can be but one governing will, if all natures but one are derived; so the infraction of

this by the assertion of self-rule, must be a wrong *essentially punitive.* Abstractedly, it is an anomaly; while practically, it is the destruction of order, and of the inlets of happiness which the Creator has opened up between himself and his universe. Sin is evil, as well in its nature as in its effects, and of that prolific and interminable sort which springs from conflict with the very principles of existence as they are announced both by the constitution of the mind, and by the character of its Author.

Evil possible —not necessary.

If it be true that 'by him all things consist,' then it is not inconsistent with the moral theory of the universe that evil should occur; inasmuch as that *theory is one of relations existing between its Author and itself which are only to be wrought out by an appreciation of his designs, and by that course of duty which he has made necessary to their fulfilment.* This must imply creature liability to swerve, and to fail; which liability may become matter-of-fact. Had no such event ever happened in a universe of moral agents, the *reality* of moral consciousness and of moral phenomena might have been questioned, since these undoubtedly imply will and freedom coupled with a sense of obligation to a Supreme Power. Hence, contingency, not necessity, must be inherent in such a system—it consists with, and is inseparable from it. If otherwise, such a system would not only in principle be subverted: it would be incapable of progression, and of compassing the highest results consistent with creature existence and the divine perfections. The ideas of reward and punishment, which are correlative to each other, must vanish, and with it the true characteristics of good and evil.

How far moral evil may be permitted to co-exist with good in such a system, or what methods it may please God to devise for arresting it, are questions entirely apart from its admissibility into the system itself. The latter is plainly a question involving the nature of the moral system, and the kind of control over it which it may seem best to the Deity to exert. Though not *ordained*, and without the shadow of ground for its origin in the divine nature; though the source of disorder and suffering beyond all computation, as the provinces of spiritual life over which it spreads may be vast, and the nature which it abuses is indestructible; it may, nevertheless, prove the occasion for a far more comprehensive manifestation of the divine character than in its absence was possible. This seems a conceivable hypothesis; while the fact of its existence and wide spread, together with all the experiences of men, and the doctrines of Scripture, offers to us assurance on this point, though the subject itself be far too deep for us to fathom.

Its existence made to 'consist' with divine rule.

That a moral system in which the character and condition of the agents are not uniform, but various and opposite to each other—could it be seen throughout, and not in fragments only (more especially in relation to the purposes of God, and the rule which he wields over it)—must be an harmonious whole, we may well accept as an inference from the fact itself. The moral universe, no less than the physical, *consists as a whole*, of whatsoever elements it may be composed, and whatever aspects it presents to the finite, but especially to the human intellect. The existence of demons is consistent

with that of angels, and that of men with both. A hell is consistent with a heaven, though not essential to it, and an earth with both. If evil be not the shadow of good, and therefore inseparable from it, it may serve to develop good, and to perfect its fruition. Beauty, though it does not imply deformity, is the more set off by it; and suffering, if it be not conditional to pleasure, enhances it.

In the way of antagonism—not of affinity—these, and a multitude of other things seemingly repugnant, are consistent with each other. Into that wide balance which composes the general harmony, many things are cast by omnipotent wisdom which seem only calculated to break it down, but which, nevertheless, even to our feeble powers when better instructed, seem to poise it as 'the weights made for the winds,' which rein them in from destructive courses. Every force has its regulator in some other; every error has its antagonist truth; and every sin its antagonist virtue. It is not for us to affirm or deny that any other than the existing universe were consistent with the perfections of God: such an one, for instance, as included *only* goodness and happiness, whether physical or moral. But as that is not the system which he has originated, we are led to infer that, *on the whole*, the actual is preferable to the possible. *Optimism* may be far from true, if affirmed of a given portion or condition of the universe, but cannot be otherwise, *if affirmed of the whole.*

Such seems to be the inevitable conclusion from a text like this, 'By him all things consist;' since it naturally carries us upward from the effect to the cause, and to the conviction that there must

be a worthy correspondence between them. True, all creature perfection is but finite, and can but in a measure shadow forth the INFINITE: still, it cannot, if perfect, *misrepresent* Him. The image it reflects must be true, though immeasurably below its divine original. A marred and mutilated universe cannot be answerable to his design who formed it, or honourable to his resources who governs it. He who is the Son and Image of the INVISIBLE cannot, without blasphemy, be degraded to the rank of a gnostic demiurge, or a manichean dualistic power. His own image in the universe must correspond, though but in finite measure, with himself as THE IMAGE OF THE FATHER, or he must be supposed to have failed in executing the grand programme assigned to him.

Two positions may be taken here.

1*st*, That by the consistency Christ has established among the creatures, we are to understand their immediate and prospective references to himself—or, *the relations they bear to him as their efficient and final Cause.*

2*dly*, *The direction of them universally, and perpetually, as the instruments of his will.*

Christ the origin and end of the creature.

(1.) This doctrine we take to be the true key to the mystery of the universe. The consistency of the system, viewed as one, entirely results from this relative aspect of it towards Christ:—it is to be viewed simply in this light, while it defies solution wherever this truth is despised or unknown. The grand summary of things is involved in this view. The parts make up a whole—not in the sense of *an aggregate, but of a system:* they are the gradations of manifestation, and the developments

of purpose entirely centering in himself. 'By him' as a person—first divine, then human; by him, first as Creator and Ruler, then as Redeemer and Saviour—'all things consist.' All these relations, offices, and agencies, are included in the divine ideas of that consistency which the universe is said to exhibit.

It cannot be too strongly dwelt upon, that 'by *him* all things consist'—not by *themselves;* their mutual adaptations and coherences are *subordinate and instrumental only;* they all originate in ONE, and all end in ONE—'IN HIM.' Hence, the mere philosophy of things can never lead to a solution of their existence, *because it excludes a knowledge of final causes.* These stand out of and beyond themselves, in a PERSON who, because he bears such a relation to the universe, must be presumed to be infinitely greater than the universe. *The sublime rationale of all things is* THE CHRIST.

The universe neither self-contained, nor in the Father.

(2.) This may be understood not only as antithetic to the doctrine of the universe as contained in itself—it is antithetic also to the doctrine, that *proximately it lies in the Father.* As it is the Son's person, so is it the Son's government that is mediational: this is the reason why it is devolved by the Father upon him. It consists with the relation which his Person bears to the Father, and to the creatures, that he should hold this office—*not with the Father himself.* The Son forms the bond between the Father and the universe—the connection is not direct and simple: it is by him as the image and representative of the Father, that 'all things consist.'

Hence, the bearing of this truth upon the great

The Father's government not open to remedial provisions.

questions of moral government, and moral evil, is as momentous as it is obvious. If under the Father's government moral evil were admissible, it is plain that it must have been *irremediable;* since the arrangements appropriate to this form of administration necessarily imply the exhibition of the person and office of the Son as Mediator. A step in advance was needful for this purpose; and the system unfolded by the Gospel, and dignified as 'the wisdom of God in a mystery,'[1] must come into being in 'the fulness of time.' Mere theistic principles afford no clue whatever to the solution of the question of moral evil generally, or the case of man in particular. They may intimate the facts and the effects of a moral relation, but they can shed no light on *remedial questions*, as it is 'by him that all things consist.' On the supposition that the Son is Creator and Lord, in distinction from the Father, there is a basis laid for a remedial polity, because mediational relations may intervene. A place is found for them in a Person standing between the creatures and the Most High, in the divine nature, who, by assuming the nature of the creature, forms the meeting-point between them—'a days-man who can lay his hand upon them both.'[2]

However unable we may be to trace out the bearings of evil, or its extent, in the universe, it is plain that its existence and its history, whether past or to come, must be looked at solely in the light of this truth—'By him all things consist.' Both its existence and its power are presupposed by the fact of Mediation, though Mediation is not ordained with a view to its extinction. This it does *to a*

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 7. [2] Job ix. 33.

limited extent only; but its operations and collateral results, when *viewed as a whole*, are probably far greater than if this were to prove its actual issue.

Remedial measures appropriate to the government of the Son.

(3.) When it is said that 'by him all things consist,' it is further evident that all things have been forecasted by Christ in reference to *his mediatorial office, as the crown of all his relations to the universe;* that this office is not merely consistent with all the foregoing displays of the divine majesty, but that it *ruled* them all, as necessary steps toward his object; and that all these rather consisted with this, than this with them, since they were all but means of advancing this as the highest glory of the Son.

These founded on his moral government.

Further, as this office of the Son is designed to advance the glory of the Father, so the moral government of which the Son as Creator is the author, is the basis of that which appertains to him as the Mediator. The latter rests upon the former, and is its appropriate counterpart and perfection, *since it affirms all its fundamental principles as eternal, and interweaves them into a new system of vastly varied operation*, insuring results in the highest degree glorious as displays of the Godhead to the universe. Mediation is properly a means of developing the divine nature in the form of a restorative and perfecting rule over the creatures, and supplies the link between the first and the last conditions of the moral universe. It opens the deepest mysteries of the divine nature, and of the creatures also. It determines whether, and to what extent, moral evil is remediable:—it exhibits the *ne plus ultra* of the divine *goodness* in dealing with it. It shows us whether, and to what extent, rectoral attributes

may be *modified* in their application to the creatures, or to a class of them: whether mercy may, *under certain conditions*, be more conducive to general order and happiness than the mere administration of law; and especially whether moral evil may be overruled by a combination of measures such as Mediation involves, to the ultimate advantage of the creature, and to the glory of God.

Leading to the highest results.

These and many other probabilities are suggested by the mediatorial office, all tending to show that it is a higher phase of moral government than that which it presupposes; and that this must be the case, if it be introductory to the ultimate government of the Father, since this supposes that by Mediation all operations and results have been developed proper to this consummation. The universe has received the last impress of perfection from the hands of the Son, and been yielded up to the Father in a condition fully answerable to His archetype.

(4.) The mediatorial office is consistent with the *nature* assumed by the Son;—this was conditional to its sway. The assumed nature determines the direct *objects* of mediatorial operation. In order to give this the utmost effect, it was not needful that these objects should be *universal;* for then the *sovereignty* of the measure might have been challenged, and it might have seemed like a provision of *equity* rather than of grace. Mediational relations of universal extent imply that primary ones should exist in connection only with a portion, class, or race of the creatures, thus excellently privileged, and made the focus of their widest agencies.

The humanity of Christ marks the subjects of redemption.

The subjects of this sway, more immediately, are

redeemed beings; for an alliance of *nature* between the Mediator and man must of itself imply something totally different in his office toward man than toward those with whom he holds no natural affinity. It implies the performance of some work on his behalf of peculiar beneficence, from which his prerogatives all take their rise, and range of operation. The affinity formed by a participation of nature is decisive as to the *kind and extent* of mediational interposition. He who as God cast himself into human nature, could intend and do nothing less than save it 'to the uttermost.' His benevolence and his power here find a fair field for their resources; and to redeem is the greater counterpart of—to create.

Christ's exaltation necessary to the administration of the Atonement.

(5.) Between the work and the office of the Mediator there is also to be marked this consistency, that it determines the immediate end of his prerogatives—SALVATION. Nothing short of absolute supremacy could suffice for this. The doctrine is thus set forth in scripture words:—'We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.'[1] The efficacy of his atonement, while fully attested by his exaltation, demands it as an administrative position. He is not exalted, surely, 'that he might taste death;' for this would be to make that death both cause and effect: its meaning, therefore, is, that his exaltation was the *proper administrative counterpart* to his atonement,—and that this exaltation determined the range of its application, namely, to bring it into contact with the entire living mass of the

[1] Heb. ii. 9.

human race, and the endless series of individual life. In other words, the Atonement thus exalted in Jesus, was to form the basis of an administration, in the benefits of which all men should in various degrees participate.

Man raised to sovereign rank by the Incarnation.

(6.) The human nature and the redemptional relations of the Mediator confer pre-eminence on *the race* thus represented, so as to evince that its condition and destiny are leading features in the economy of the universe. The human race is, by the personal constitution of the Mediator and its purposes, exalted to a supreme rank in the grades of being comprising the moral system. Without expatiating on the *germinal* powers of the human nature, or the presage of its final grandeur implied in such a fact, it is sufficient to mark this inauguration of Humanity in the person of the Mediator, as of itself indicating the position which all things hold to it. Explicit testimony was hardly needed to assure us that the SOVEREIGN NATURE among the creatures must be the human, as the immediate consequence of its correlation with Christ. Doubtless, it is this high bearing of the Incarnation on the race which lays the foundation for that supreme act of grace which makes believing men the ‘ sons of God.’

Hence, it follows that all existence foreign to man, not merely bears a consistent relation to him as redeemed, but that this consistency is one of universal subserviency to his welfare. The centre, and, as it were, core of the universe, is MAN: and we apprehend that the ruling principle in the inspired description of Creation, which represents all things on earth as directly related to man, and bound together in him, is applicable with still

greater force to the universe, as bound together by the relations and purposes of his redemption. This is the true key to the language of the psalm, which descants on his redemption by a reference to the facts of his creation. 'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' His position by creation was *a type of the grand future event of a strictly universe-subjection to him in the person of Christ.* It is pertinent, therefore, to note the chief points of subordinate relation which the outlying system of things holds to man in connection with Christ. These extend—

The material universe as related to man in Christ.

(1.) To the material universe, however vast and seemingly remote from all correspondence with man whatsoever. The emphatic notices recurring in Scripture, to the effect that the Creator of 'the worlds' is the Redeemer of men, and that he subordinates them all to mediatorial designs, settles this doctrine beyond gainsaying. The quotation from 108th Psalm, found in Heb. i., and there applied to the Son as Mediator, comprises this truth very clearly: 'And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning,' etc. Passages also occurring in the Epistle of Peter, and in the Apocalypse, agree in including the material universe in the 'all things' put under the feet of Christ. What the relations are which the material system as a whole bears to these designs, it is utterly beyond our power to trace, any more than to trace by scientific processes the influence which the whole exerts on the frame and condition of our planet. That such influences do exist, is plain matter-of-fact. *System* is the great doctrine of Astronomy; nor are there any facts, much less probabilities, that militate against the statements of

Scripture, taken in their broadest and most literal sense.

Man's relation to the world of the present.

But there are two facts that bear on this question with great force: these are, the relation which the physical system of the globe bears to human nature (to which it is clearly subordinate), and the relation which the material universe bears to Christ as its Lord. These two facts contain two great doctrines, or rather, one doctrine in two phases of development. In the first phase, we see human nature brought into being as the crown of a long series of creative acts. The second shows us the same nature carried immeasurably in advance in the person of the Mediator, and forming the apex of a creation as yet but in embryo. The existing material universe is, as yet, in a condition far out of keeping with the human nature even as it exists in Christ, its grand antitype. Its elements and processes, as far as they affect man, cannot 'consist' with his nature in its final state of glory, and as it now exists in Christ, but only with the initial, infantine, and probationary section of its history. Its scheme of life is analogous to that of mere animals, and is part of a system which depends entirely on the widest laws of material arrangement. It is, so to speak, dovetailed into the whole, and cannot be other than it is, unless the whole system that surrounds it were entirely remodelled.

A new world necessary to his perfection.

By no laws or processes of Nature as it now is, can the second type of man, as it is seen in Christ, be brought out. This is no result of the human constitution as it now is, nor of the constitution of things as standing with it. The laws of all animal

life are those of birth, maturity, decay, and death. The human race is constituted on the successional principle, perpetuated only by renewal, and by the loss of its individual components. Hence, a single specimen, such as that exhibited in the human person of Christ—of man *reconstituted*—implies nothing less than a *new creation*, in the fullest sense of the term. It represents *a constitution of things as immediately the result of Omnipotence, as did the production of man himself from an anterior creation;* and it demands a material cast of the surrounding universe in perfect harmony with itself.

The resurrection-body a clue to this mystery.

The resurrection-body is the clue to this mystery of a coming material transformation of the universe, which, by means of this change, will be brought finally to an entire correspondence with the human nature when both physically and morally 'glorified.' Less than this cannot be implied in the Epistle to the Romans which speaks of 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God'—contrasting the condition of glorified existence with the travails and sufferings incident to the system of animal life which now obtains. Nor can less be taught us in the passage in the Philippians,[1] where the resurrection of the body is the declared effect of Christ's power 'to subdue *all things* to Himself;' that is, *to remodel all things, so as to harmonize them with his own humanity, and that of his people*, of which his own is the great prototype. Thus also, in the description of the resurrection-body as 'spiritual,' and, as such, the antithesis of the natural or animal, a constitution of material existence is implied, which, though utterly inscrutable to us, is

[1] Phil. iii. 21.

decisive in its testimony to this point: 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body;'[1] that is, not only is a spiritual, or spiritualized body, in itself a possibility, it is also a fact. More than one member of the human race furnishes the example, beside 'the Lord from heaven.' Examples are already in existence of a future race of glorified men, and in them is seen the nucleus of a future material system of corresponding glory.

New combinations of matter not improbable.

Nor is this hypothesis, however strange, either fanatical or improbable. Of the antecedents of the existing universe, we are as ignorant as of its hereafter; while the geologic features of our globe demonstrate *that unalterable permanency* is by no means the ruling doctrine of creation. The present condition of the material universe may be *but one of a series of conditions*, as yet but partially developed, and expanded over epochs past and to come, of which no finite intelligence may know the bounds. But this we know, that *stability* is not disassociated from *change* in any departments of nature open to our investigation. The essence of matter is itself beyond the reach of our observation. Atoms may be assumed as its elementary powers, and speculations be advocated on their properties and laws of combination; but still, the *essence* of matter defies our powers of detection; and all that can be said of existing phenomena is, that they represent, not things *as they must be*, *but things as they are*. Without supposing Omnipotence to alter the essential properties of matter, its forms of combination may be conceived to differ greatly from any already known, and their results to be as

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 44.

surprisingly new, as if creation had at once sprung up before us out of nothing.

The illustrations employed by St Paul in aid of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, may be extended to the general system of materialism to which the body belongs: 'There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.'[1] 'There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.' These illustrations are intended to show that we have facts in the universe outlying man, as well as in the animal system surrounding him, that exhibit the endless modifications possible to the substance we call matter; leaving it doubtful whether we should most admire the power which could create such material on which to operate, or the effects brought out of it; while both are adapted to dispel the notion so apt to possess us, that Nature is either in itself a *necessary* thing, or that it has exhausted the resources of its Author.

In Scripture, Creation[2] is strikingly represented as the speech of God, and Providence also as that speech prolonged from one age to another;[3] but that 'speech,' as to its cadences and its periods, who can forestall? or tell us when, or in what, the mighty volume of these oracles shall close? Nevertheless, Christ is the Word which gave birth and destiny to the universe. As a system, from first to last, it consists by him; and the material portion of it, however magnificent, is simply the monument of his perfections—the 'sign of the Son of Man,' whether on the earth or in the heavens, and but

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 41. [2] Ps. xxxiii. 6. [3] Heb. i. 3.

the exterior of that temple in which his glory and his worship combine for ever.

Man's moral relation to other beings.

(2.) The next relation of man to the universe is a moral one. He is, though perhaps the youngest, the most important member of the great family of intelligents. The relation of man to other orders of being is brought out in Scripture in a twofold way, yet in intimate connection with his moral history, his fall, and his recovery. Pre-existent moral evil to the catastrophe which has involved the race in ruin, is matter of plain scripture testimony—a fact which has its antithesis in the weight of moral goodness thrown into the scale of its recovery. Both these facts rest on the assumption of an affinity, and a very close one, binding together the different sections of the moral universe, by which principles and agencies, whether good or evil, are made widely transmissible, and represented on the vastest scale. Thus man is reached by both, and becomes the point in which these eternal antagonisms meet and conflict.

The effects of Mediation not limited to man.

Without entering on a field of speculation to which such a subject offers strong temptation, it rather comports with the point in hand to suggest its bearings on the offices of Mediation. The *consistency* of the introduction of evil into the world, and its perpetuated spread through the default of man's very nature, together with the co-existence of a moral administration reflecting the divine character, implies, not merely a system of recovery as its counterpart, but some great arrest upon the course of moral evil itself. Man's welfare, though the *primary*, is not to be regarded as the *only* object of mediatorial provision. It is certain that the

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Scripture represents the person and undertaking of Christ as broadly antagonistic to the author of evil and his rule; and that, in the upshot of his plans, is involved the entire unravelling of the moral plot of the universe. Accordingly, all the agents of evil are subjected to the sway of the Mediator. The organization and action of all evil powers are interwoven with the plan of mediatorial government, which owes its very existence to their prevalence. Thus, in respect to man, the most signal triumph of the evil One turns to his most condign defeat, since out of the very nature that was prostrate and lost, there springs the 'Horn of salvation,' and the Destroyer of Apollyon.

Its final issue the counteraction of evil.

Hence, from events we are entitled to infer that the human race was formed for this purpose—at once the noblest and most comprehensive. It would seem that evil must do its worst ere it should be counteracted, and must stretch onward to engulph *man* ere its antidote should be furnished. Thus, its maximum became its waning point, and the last addition to its empire its overthrow. This is accomplished by the Mediator's sway, and through the fortunes of a particular race chosen for this purpose. Evil is now simply a *subject element* in the economy of Christ's rule. Encircled and restrained, though not destroyed, evil is but a basis for his operations, a foil to his glories, a *sine quâ non* to the development of his resources and achievements.

This issue may be brought about in a twofold manner; namely, by a direct restraint imposed upon evil powers in their operations on human nature; or by the elevation of that nature, so as to render it inapt to be ensnared by temptation.

Of both these, the gospels afford confirmatory examples.

Man aided by angelic ministries.

On the same side of the account, we put 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,'—their helpful offices on man's behalf, and their profound interest in the issue of the great moral struggle unfolded by his history. These agencies and provisions form a strong offset against the evil powers leagued for his destruction. Their *affinity* to man is the basis of their intercourse with, and of their influence over him; while their subordination to the Mediator as the head of his race, as well as 'Lord of all,' binds them to a course of ministry, which, of whatever kind, we must believe to be eminently conducive to man's welfare. Whether this ministry be ceaseless as to individuals, or occasional only; whether it be limited to the Church, or extended to the world; whether it be concerned with the policy of princes, the affairs of nations, or the exigencies of Christ's service; it is always antagonistic to Satan, and his emissaries: it fills the same sphere, intermingles with the same events, and meets in the same nature, or the same individual man. Not limited to the system of Providence, whether general or particular, this ministry embraces the higher domain of mind, and casts itself into the spring of human action. Reaching both the body and the soul, it is succour, control, or restraint, as the case requires. It may embolden, or terrify; cast its ægis over helplessness, or beat down strength into the dust. Frustrating many a well-laid scheme of the adversary when on the eve of execution, it turns against him the weapons fabricated for his

triumph. The mechanism of the world is not turned by human hands alone, nor immediately even by the divine; there are *intermediate powers* at work everywhere, invisible indeed, but not the less real, and all the more mighty as they form the links between man and the Deity.

This doctrine does not in the least interfere with that of the direct agency of God upon the human mind; since it is *subsidiary only, like that of man upon man*, and would be utterly unavailing but as it rests upon this fact. That which gives goodness its strength is the same as that which renders evil powerless in man, namely, the grace of God. This alone determines the moral condition of the human agent, and his relations to the agency brought to bear upon him from without. It ranks that agent *immediately under God*, and makes the agency, whether good or bad, which touches him, subordinate, and important only as it is made to affect the higher relation subsisting between the creature and God.

Angels the immediate servants of Christ.

The relation which angels bear to man in the economy of redemption, is one of high beneficence and profound interest. They are one and all ministers of Christ: their sphere is the world, but especially the Church. Even their judicial work is resolvable into beneficence, because not punitive merely, but corrective; while the sympathies of these holy beings are deeply allied to the moral welfare of man in his spiritual recovery, which they follow with the most fervid delight. 'There is joy,' said our Lord, 'in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.'

In fine, throughout Scripture, 'principalities and

powers' are represented as following the course of redemption, from its earliest dawn to its meridian splendour. They appear under every dispensation of law and grace—visit patriarchs, and protect the saints. They are unveiled in the vision of prophets, mingle in the personal history of the Saviour, and in the primitive movements of the Church. They are attached to the kingdom of heaven throughout all its eventful history in the world, till consummated by 'the glorious appearing' of Christ. The last book of the New Testament portrays them ready winged, holding trumpets and vials, whenever the seal is broken by the Lamb; thus showing that his purposes are travelling on to their accomplishment. This is the book of *his* revelations; it unfolds the plans and agencies of his kingdom, as commensurate with the universe and as very mainly identified with the ministry of angels.

Their office a source of bliss and perfection to themselves.

Nor can we fail to perceive that the same Being who binds to his sceptre the powers called 'his enemies,' making them, though unwittingly, the instruments of his will, must needs be supreme over powers congenial with his character, and morally fitted to advance his designs. There seems a striking *consistency* between the appropriation of these high powers, and the nature of the dominion to which they belong. The highest moral exhibitions of Deity must be the source of their highest moral perfection and bliss; and the employments to which this relation has given birth, the strongest expressions of loyalty to The Supreme of which even their faculties are capable.

There is a *consistency* in the doctrine which ranks all good agents immediately under the Mediator,

because he may justly claim all resources suitable to his purposes who has the ability to direct them to the highest ends. He may lay his hand on all the good who undertakes to suppress and uproot all the bad. The union of angels with him is to them not only the highest test of allegiance, but the path opened up through service to perfection. The work assigned to them brings them into more intimate fellowship with the Lord himself, and must immeasurably add even to their joy, who have not merely been his loyal subjects amidst rebellion, but have been engrossed in the great war which shall end in giving everlasting peace and stability to the universe.

Man's relation to a future state.

(3.) Another relation of man to existence beyond his own, is to the realms of *the invisible*. This rests on the spiritual and immortal in his nature, and its release by disembodiment from the sphere of its origin. These facts comprise the great mystery of man, deeper and broader than the world, and in them Religion roots itself. The most universal and speaking note of human consciousness, it is rather confirmed than told by Revelation. This rather presents its train of momentous consequences, than introduces the *conception* of separate existence to the human mind. As an element in the earliest and purest forms of human belief, it has survived in various degrees the blight of superstition, when its fellow-truths have become extinct. Nearest and most cherished of all the doctrines of our manhood, it is yet the most subtle and difficult to grasp. Impacted with materialism into our constitution, and dependent on it for its every law of outgoing agency, the whole realm of spiritual being within and around us is overlaid with a veil which the very

conditions of our existence forbid us to uplift. In this direction, reason hardly carries us to the point of consciousness, on which all reasoning depends: nor are we sure that the celebrated axiom, 'I think, therefore I am,' more correctly interprets that testimony than that which inverts it—I am, therefore I think. As to physiology, if it fail to satisfy us on the question, What is life? how much less can it answer the question, What is spirit? To man, the strain at self-comprehension seems a strain at the impossible, only short of that which attempts the comprehension of his Maker. Nor is it probable that a nature so endowed, and existing so intimately in alliance with 'the Father of Spirits,' can ever be, either to ourselves, or our fellow-intelligents, more than a stupendous fact—the import of which not even eternity can unfold.

In the New Testament, the world and the soul are not antithesized as equivalents, but as opposites; while life, as it there stands for the entire capacity of man for suffering or bliss, is an endowment to which the whole system of the visible is not so much as an iota. By virtue of this principle, the life of man, from a culminating point, runs off into a line of infinity, untraceable it is true, but awfully real. The Sheol of the Hebrews, the Hades of the Greeks, and the Hell of the Saxon, represent not the dreams of fancy, but spheres of being hidden from the gaze of men. Hidden emphatically is that condition of being which implies one world shut and another opened; and the whole frame and organism of life once and for ever cancelled, giving to death the hour and power of an eternal birth. Hidden is that state truly, of whose relations to

time, space, and materialism, we are totally ignorant: what are the modes of its intellectual, moral, and social subsistence; how much of the past is combined with the present; and how far even the bygone world of sense may be reflected in the ever-living reminiscence and fancy of the soul. Hidden truly is that state, which, though infinitely more than the visible as the world of man, eschews all communion with it—silent as the grave, and more utterly away from our abodes than the most distant star that flings its light hitherward. Always claiming, but never satisfied; filling, but never full, it is ever enlarging with the spoils of death, till number fails to reckon them, and the very heavens are too small a scroll on which to inscribe their names.

Yet perfect individuality reigns throughout this countless throng. Each has an eternal lot of consciousness, and a separate infinity of interest. Here, character is stamped with immutability, and big with destiny. On the one hand, we read of Paradise, of heaven, of 'the city which hath foundations,' and of the 'Father's house' in which are 'many mansions;'[1] on the other, of 'Tophet'[2] and 'Gehenna,' of the 'place of torment,' of 'the pit without bottom,[3] of 'the worm that dieth not,' and 'the fire that is not quenched.'[4] We read of the 'great gulf'[5] that divides this vast realm of doom, —the dark, deep, untraversable chasm, which makes Tartarus and Elysium mutually incommunicable.

Revelation teaches mainly the moral features of this state.

All the details, the phenomena of such a state, Scripture passes over, as either impertinent or im-

[1] John xiv. 2. [2] Isa. xxx. 33. [3] Rev. xx. 3.
[4] Mark ix. 48. [5] Luke xvi. 26.

possible; but its *moral features* are made prominent, and its *retributory character* equally distinct and profound. *There*, goodness lends nothing to crime, and justice abates nothing of its demands. *There*, every lot is award. *There*, none are undone by misfortune, and none exalted by factitious rights. *There*, no seeming is without the real; no virtue in tears; no vice in triumph. *There*, all that is adventitious to man is withdrawn—exchanged for a simple truthfulness that lights up everything, and hides nothing. *There*, the summary of antecedent life is borne in the moral consciousness of each, and is transferred into all the relationships he holds to the infinite future.

These are the truths which Scripture so briefly but pregnantly epitomizes as life and death, good and evil: these, the incomprehensible facts of human doom—the behests of Will, both sovereign and subjective. Man's greatness is his destiny unlinked from the world, and time, and sense—abstracted from everything but his personal condition. Born to it by his wider relations to the universe, he is fixed in it by a fiat as omnipotent as that which bade him be an imperishable witness to truths which the creation was formed to announce, government instituted to uphold, and redemption superadded to emphasize to the uttermost. Such are the truths to be solemnly recapitulated in the final assize, and to be inscribed on the living universe as the autograph of Deity, 'I am the Lord.'

The Mediator has absolute dominion over the future state.

The *consistency*, however, of this relation of man with the mediatorial office, is the matter in hand. The scriptures which affirm this relation are such as these: the address of Jesus to the expiring ma-

lefactor, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;'[1]—the passage in St Paul, 'that to this end Christ both died and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living;'[2]—the words of the Lord himself to John in the visions of Patmos: 'I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore; and I have the keys of hell and of death.'[3] In the empire of death are manifestly included both the grave and the state of separate spirits. 'Death and hell' are constantly coupled in this relation, and with a view to denote the absolute dominion of the Mediator over the whole nature of man. Death, in its twofold aspects toward that nature, is as truly ruled by Christ as is the whole field of our present being.

The power of the keys, or the authority to dismiss men from the world to enter on a new existence, or a state of partial non-existence, is that which the Mediator challenges as his prerogative. This power pertains to him in virtue of his having traversed the state of the dead in his own person; and he accordingly parades this proof of its reality in the face of earth and heaven. No fact could so strikingly proclaim this prerogative as the one he here alleges, 'I am he that was dead, and am alive again.' These mysterious realms of his dominion are impersonated in his own history, and are thus shown to be very specially of human interest. They bear directly on the nature as well as the design of the power which the Mediator exercises over men.

Death federally, not personally penal.

There is an implied reference in these words of Christ to the *redemptional nature of that power*, and its combination with the moral agency of man, ren-

[1] Luke xxiii. 43. [2] Rom. xiv. 9. [3] Rev. i. 18.

dering the state of death immediately, though not finally, retributory. Here both justice and grace hold their respective conditions of award. The passage assumes the sinfulness of man federally considered, to which the state of death is therefore penally attached—not in a *personal*, but only in a *federal sense*. It relates to the race as a whole under Mediation, and its states as ruled accordingly. The unseen bears its relations to the seen, the dead to the living, the retributory to the redemptional, the past to the present, and the present to the future.

The empire of Christ over man is one of *progression:* it has its stages more or less advanced. Times and seasons are included in it of unknown sweep of duration, and comprehending human beings of all varieties of grade and condition: the patriarch who nearly told up his ten centuries, and the infant of an hour's breath—the very first victim of death, and the last that marks the current moment. The human race is far more truly yonder than here: *there* is no law of waste to limit its expansion, and no departures to set against arrivals. An host already innumerable is constantly swelling in vastness; but yet no crowd—no chaos. Law and order are all-sovereign—the eye and the hand of Christ individualizing the whole, and marshalling this teeming mass into step with his purposes and his kingdom.

The invisible state intermediate only.

Yet, vast and pregnant as the invisible is in relation to man, it is *transitive*, not final, as to his condition. It is but an *intermediate state*—an episode, and that not a long one, in his being, when the after-eternity is considered which he is destined to fill. To this it is closely adjusted; and for its in-

troduction all things are ripening. The present heaven of the Church lies within the bosom of this mysterious but undefined region, which appertains to the domains of the dead: the final heaven is a creation yet unborn. Its grand elementary character is everlasting; but as a state or condition of redeemed existence, the present heaven is but temporary. The present hell of the lost is also temporary: it is not 'the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' It is an intermediate, though a terrible antecedent—the birth-throes of the last catastrophe.

But whatever be the conditions of departed souls, we are chiefly concerned to know that they are ruled by the Mediator—that it consists with his 'power over all flesh' that these should, as to man, be but departments of his empire, and receptacles either for 'spirits in prison,' 'till the judgment of the great day,' or for those 'elect' souls who await the coming of 'the Bridegroom.' Were it otherwise, the prerogatives of the Mediator were clipped, and reduced to insignificancy; since the man of to-day is not the man of to-morrow, and by far the greatest and most advanced part of the race were thus removed beyond his reach. If the intermediate state of man were not subject to his sway, it would obviously lack *continuity*, as well as the most certain pledge of its final consummation. Death would remain, not what it always has been to human nature—an enemy, but the 'king of terrors;' nor would it be a true attestation of Christ, 'If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death;'[1] or that written by inspiration, that he

[1] John ix. 51.

delivered them 'who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'[1] On this supposition, Christian hope must be a delusion, even though the fears of the wicked be not a chimera. The 'strong consolation' of saintly dying cannot be ascribed to 'the Spirit of truth;' and the rapture of the martyred Stephen, as well as of a host that followed him through the fires of the same confession, were, if not blasphemies, to say the least, rhapsodies.

In fine, we may apply to the hypothetic falsity of our doctrine the words of an Apostle on the hypothetic falsity of Christ's resurrection: 'Your faith is vain;' 'and they also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.'[2] On the supposition that death is the vanishing point of mediatorial empire, either physically or morally considered, one of two consequences must follow: either, that the foundation or the superstructure of redemption is disproportionate and irrelevant,—the foundation, if the human subject of it be not naturally immortal, with an answerable moral relation to the Deity: the superstructure, if this be not commensurate with his entire scope and capacity, an economy adapted to the utmost stretch of his duration and destiny. If it drop men at any point of existence short of the goal, and cease to pervade this existence, either in its benignant or its judicial aspects, then were Christ's prerogatives insufficient for their purpose, and disproportionate to the facts on which they had been reared. The very nature of redemption implies the possession by the Redeemer of plenary rights over his subjects—rights corresponding with their capacity and relations to his designs.

[1] Heb. ii. 15. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 18.

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The invisible world the seat of Christ's rule.

In accordance with this position of the Redeemer toward our race, the *seat* of his rule must be the invisible rather than the visible world. It *consists* more fully with his dominion over man, viewed in his wider relations toward the universe, that the person of his Sovereign should hold a nearer alliance with his spiritual than with his bodily nature. The reasons why the Redeemer is absent from us, are the reasons why he is present elsewhere. There are physical as well as moral conditions, which accord in the one case, which are repugnant in the other. To this effect St Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, introduces the words of the 68th Psalm, 'Thou hast ascended up on high; thou hast led captivity captive.' The quotation, as thus employed, shows that all prerogatives necessary to the subjection of the Redeemer's foes, and the full establishment of his kingdom over and in men, were demonstrated by the facts of his descent and his ascension. These open, in brief, a personal history of the Messiah's power, in his progress from the 'lower parts of the earth' to the throne of the highest heavens.

The descent into Hades preconditional to the Ascension.

Now, it is not easy to perceive why the Apostle has so antithesized the ascension of Christ into the heavens with his previous descent into 'the lower parts of the earth,' unless, in his view, the one event was conditional to the other:—necessary as an exercise of his prerogatives over that region of existence, ere he could rise to the highest seat and glory of his dominion;—or, 'that he might fill all things,' that is, give plenary effect to his prerogatives throughout the universe, and not in one or more sections of it only. For, let it be observed,

the quotation from the Psalm, literally taken, neither implies nor intimates the construction put upon it by the inspired commentator. The ascension of the person spoken of from earth to heaven does not imply that he had descended *below* earth, ere he ascended above it. The words of the Apostle are an *addition* to those of the prediction, though fully warranted by its application to the history of Jesus, and the New Testament view of his undertaking; since the enemies here alluded to could not have been human beings (as were those of David, the typical deliverer, whose victories and services for religion are here celebrated), but 'spiritual wickedness in high places,' 'the rulers of the darkness of this world.'

Hence, the representations of the defeat and capture of these enemies by Christ, who leads them in triumph (or, to use the Apostle's words), 'makes a show of them openly,' naturally leads us to the question, When, and where, were these victories gained? and thus, to the deeper meaning of the Psalmist's language than that which lies upon the surface. Now, that these achievements were accomplished after the crucifixion, and within the precincts of the unseen world, is the fact which the Apostle teaches; for he expressly says that our Lord descended first 'into the lower parts of the earth,' or into hell, to spoil 'principalities and powers' which held dominion there, and to bring forth from thence the spoils or captives, which were to avouch his victory, and to grace his triumph. According to St Paul, the leading of 'captivity captive' implied this. Our Lord, when he died, entered those seats of hostile power, in virtue of the

prerogatives acquired by his atoning work, and hurled dismay and destruction upon them in the very centre of their dominion. It was *thence* that he dragged his captives, and paraded them as it were, in his ascension-progress, before the universe. He filled 'all things' with the sound and glory of his triumph.

Thus, we see why the ascension of Christ implied his previous descent 'into the lower parts of the earth.' The ascension was to be public and triumphal—a grand spectacle to 'principalities and powers in heavenly places.' Our Lord must needs return, not merely from earth, but from hell as a conqueror, and be seated in supremacy over 'all things' as the proof and measure of his glorious deed. This great preamble to the Redeemer's exaltation in heaven, shows us clearly the nature and prospects of his dominion: it subsists from henceforth as a rule over *vanquished, not reigning evil*, and is designed to carry forward and to complete its subjugation *in detail* by a plan of fore-arranged, progressive reduction, rather than by a sweeping judicial extinction.

Henceforth evil a subject power.

The course of Christ's empire is one of advance from the memorable hour of infernal defeat just noticed; and is, in fact, but that defeat developed to its last consequences. The effect of this victory and enthronement on the estate and prospects of his people then awaiting him in the unseen world, and of all added to them since his arrival, are more matters of inference and speculation than of positive teaching from the Scriptures. But the aspect of the passage before us is strongly in favour of some advancement in their condition correspond-

The blessedness of the resting Church enhanced by the Mediator's triumph.

ing with the event on which the Redeemer's exaltation was founded. This seems to have been the opinion of the early Church, and also of many divines of note in later times. Probably, it was accompanied by the translation of this disembodied host into some higher region of his measureless domains, some privileged place of dignity and bliss where his own person is enthroned, and where their unity as members with their glorified Head became an immediate and soul-transporting event.

This view is strongly supported by the passages which represent both the militant and the resting portions of the Church as 'gathered together in one,'[1] and as subsisting, whether in heaven or earth, as 'one body;' and by the tenor of scripture representations respecting the state of the departed just—that 'they are made perfect,'[2] which perfection appears to relate to their citizenship in heaven, and not to the condition of their moral nature merely. Even now, disciples are said 'to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'[3] The state corresponding to this, of disembodied existence, therefore, cannot be 'the lower parts of the earth,' but heaven—the heaven of Christ's person and glory—the temple of God's presence and service, where the songs of salvation are uplifted for ever as 'the sound of many waters.'

[1] Eph. i. 10. [2] Heb. xii. 23. [3] Eph. ii. 6.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS.

The Dominion of Christ over Man.

These notices of Christ's general dominion in relation to man, are appropriately followed by those of his dominion over man himself. Man, in virtue of his natural relation to the Mediator and the offices of his redemption, is to be regarded as the principal subject of his dominion. Man is, in truth, not less the object than the subject of his Redeemer's sway; this is 'by him and for him,' subordinately only to that sense in which it is affirmed of Christ himself.

This rule is,—

Providence, founded on the atonement.

Providential. Recurrence is here had to a position formerly advanced, that the Atonement is both the basis and the scope of mediatorial administration. The bearing of this upon the condition of the human race is of the first importance: it supplies us with the master-principle to be applied to the solution, or, at least, the illustration of its general phenomena. Viewing, then, the Atonement as a world-comprising fact, all the phenomena of human nature are to be regarded in the closest connection with it, and as exhibiting an exposition of its influence upon the race. The aspect of the Atonement toward our race is practically indicated

by the course of Providence, from the beginning until now. Human nature is not really adjusted to a standard rule of any supposable antecedent necessity, or even to one of primitive application to it: that rule is rather itself adapted *to human nature as it is*, which supposes that nature to exist under new and very peculiar conditions, and for purposes in harmony with itself. This consideration renders all theories of Providence founded on abstract reasonings illusory; they are altogether inapplicable to an administration founded on this principle, and consequently *to the facts of Providence* as they stand with it. On the theory of human existence which takes it in connection with the Atonement, the race is entirely bound up with mediational purposes, and is a means only to the attainment of answerable results. This doctrine our Lord himself has taught us: 'As Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him.'[1] This 'power over all flesh,' so beneficent in design, is operative in the ceaseless, boundless production of human life, under certain aspects, and for certain ends. It is like the production of a material for an intended work, or (to allude to a scripture figure) the preparation of the clay by the potter for his vessels: though every vessel may not be 'a vessel unto honour'—some may be marred in his hands, and some only 'fitted for destruction'—yet, to give life is an act of goodness, not of wrath, and is *of itself* an augury of benevolent design. According to this, so much is created, and

Christ alone gives life.

[1] John xvii. 2.

under such conditions—as is agreeable to a particular design. Human life, viewed as an homogeneous mass, is ruled by these principles: it is continued from age to age, and developed, with its accidental varieties, under the impress of one purpose, forwarded not only by every section of it, ancient or modern, but by every individual of the race.

Race-life in Adam and in Christ.

This doctrine of life, though defined only in its moral significance, is plainly implied in the 5th chapter of Romans, where the antithetic positions of Adam and Christ to the race are profoundly opened; because in no sense could a correlative federalism between these personages have been asserted, had there been *no vital combination* of the race with either. The involution of the race in these two respectively is the fact assumed, or no entail of good or evil could have been said to follow—the effect would have lacked its cause. The one great distinction between the two is, that though there is *parallel*, there is not *parity*, either in a personal or a federal sense; since the Mediator is not a *man only*, and the effects of his relation to the race are not merely co-existent with those of his co-representative, but are subsequent and consummatory.

The bearings of this truth on human life in general, make it characteristically a religious thing; and from this point alone we are required to view it. It rules not merely the amount of life which is to form the race-mass, but even its individual apportionments. Closely entwined, for example, with a moral and probationary character, its chief relation is with the life to come. If 'godliness' alone formally holds the charter of life, according to St

Paul, still that charter rests on the broader basis of race-life, as ascertained by the bearings of the Atonement. As to the general term of life, brief and fugitive as it is, like the shadow or the flower, it is yet sufficient for its purpose, namely, that of developing principles and character. This, all experience shows, is by no means merely a work of time: on the contrary, it is seen that, as a rule, this result depends on the seasons of life, and the influences which develop our nature, rather than on its duration. The laws of our physical, are wisely adapted to those of our moral being, and are intended to aid their enforcement. The brevity and precariousness of life have a momentous moral bearing on our nature; nor does it appear, its moral condition being what it is, how the great lessons of life and destiny could have been otherwise so solemnly impressed.

National life a phase of Providence.

National life recalls another religious trait of Providence. This doctrine is strongly affirmed by St Paul in his discourse before the Athenians: 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord.'[1] Probably we should place the narrative of the Babel-building in the light of this scripture; for the lesson taught us by the confusion of tongues seems to be the necessity foreseen by Providence of breaking up the human stock into new national centres, their settlement in separate territories, and the advancement of the common weal by an arrangement bearing the force of a perpetual law,

[1] Acts xvii. 26.

in opposition to the predilections of patriarchy, and the dreams of modern cosmopolitans.

Nationalism, thus affirmed in Scripture, and exemplified in the history of the race, seems to have been an instrument of God necessary to the healthy working, perhaps to the very existence, of the great social system. It is the one bulwark against the strong tendencies of men to degenerate till they reach the lowest point of barbarism, and to secure an impetus in the contrary direction. The plan of Providence is to preserve the race from stagnation and effeteness, by planting in it the principles of constant but orderly change. Races are moulded or extinguished by intercourse with others. Nations rise and fall, not as monotonous cycles of events, but by laws of Providence, giving them birth and doomsdays, much on the same principle as it does individuals. Succession is in both cases the necessary order for securing the welfare of the whole, to which the parts are strictly subordinate. Nations die because their work is done, and other work is assigned to their successors.

The whole machinery of national life is designed to bear upon the social, and, through the social, upon the moral and religious condition of human nature in general. The development of man intellectually and socially, is essential to the development of man morally and religiously. Religion, though itself the ruling power of the human constitution, cannot be developed *alone;* it must be associated with certain conditions, or states of culture, of which national life is meant to be the depository and vehicle. The national centres of the race have kept its mind in motion from age to age,

forming, so to speak, the poles of its magnetic currents, which have very mainly served to conditionalize the world of men in respect to the higher objects of their existence.

Civil government an ordinance of God.

It is still more important to observe that civil government, as the organ through which national life is developed, is itself a striking example of the divine rule. We have the highest authority for representing it as God's ordinance for man's good. Polity is, in fact, the *social transcript of Religion:* it assimilates to its leading features, and is, to a certain extent, a substitute for them, in their too general abeyance upon the earth; while it powerfully tends to indoctrinate men in the higher truths of the divine rule. Religion has been generally felt by men to hold an intimate alliance with government; so that their offices have often been united in the same persons, and their sanctions have been blended in the same forms of administration. So intimately, indeed, are Polity and Religion related to each other, that it is at least doubtful whether the one can subsist without the other, and whether they are not natural, and consequently inseparable allies.

It is to little purpose objected that the world has not actually been conformed to these arrangements; and that, therefore, the truth of this statement may be questioned; because the same objection lies against the course of Revelation itself, to the claims and designs of which the world has hitherto very partially responded. It is enough, if design can be shown, either from the facts of adaptation in certain providential courses, or from express scripture testimony. These causes may

have been only partially operative hitherto, like Christianity itself; or we may be unable to make out the programme from history, any more than we are to identify the fulfilment of prophecy, in anything like a systematic way, with the course of events. Still, the truth of prophecy and of Christianity rests on sure foundations. We see, by a reference to Scripture facts, that, to a certain extent, failure in declared purposes may consist with their fullest accomplishment in particular aspects. The full effect of a series of divine arrangements may be hindered by human obliquity; but the *whole* is not therefore a nullity, as sacred history abundantly proves.

The illustration of this doctrine of Providence supplied by the people of Israel is very striking, bearing strongly both on the office of a nation in respect to the world, and the substantial success of that office, subject to great abatements. As an instance of national life directed toward the world, Israel, in certain capital points, stands alone, since its office was directly and solely *religious;* but the example shows the extreme use it might please God to make of the general principle of national life, in this case, rather than *the limit of the principle itself.*

The aspects of modern society towards Christianity.

The various offices of society—civilisation, philosophy, literature, and even the sterner offices of war and conquest, constantly operating on the race through its great sectional divisions—all tend in one direction; they all have their space to fill, and their tribute to yield to the general and permanent progress of man. Even as to their operation in the religious direction, the example of the Jews has its

analogy and its counterpart in the destinies of other nations, from the days of their downfall to the present hour. The Roman empire was instrumental in the spread of Christianity for centuries after its first propagation; and this office seems to have devolved on the nations of modern Europe since this was broken up—and upon our own country very specially. Western civilisation is rapidly becoming ascendant in the world at large: its power, politics, learning, commerce, and ideas, are fast taking possession of the older centres of national life; and with this, to a large extent, the Christian religion itself is in the way of acquiring new dominions, and of acceleration to its predestined goal.

Times and seasons characteristic of divine operations.

The scripture reference so often made to 'the times and seasons' which God ordains to pass over the world—suggesting an analogy between the field of nature and that of humanity—seems to contain a tacit testimony to this doctrine. The ripeness or 'fulness of time,' which it recognises as God's chosen hour to advance by some signal methods his merciful designs toward the world, looks to the collective bearings of these social agencies on the condition of man, and the stages which that condition makes appropriate to his ends. As in the progress of the globe itself, from its most rudimental to its finished form, we mark a graduated operation, divisible into epochs, at once terminative and initial; so in the progress of the world of man we mark a similar order of divine action. The established and leisurely course of God's operations by man, as well as for man, successively issues in epochs characteristic of finish and recommencement. Of these, the earliest and most re-

markable was the termination of the antediluvian period; and after this, the introduction of the *national era*, by the dispersion of the Babel-builders. Then follows the age of the Theocracy, during which the religion of the world was singly national; and, lastly, the Christian age, during which the national principle is to bear its utmost fruit. All the arrangements of Providence, as they respect nations under 'the dispensation of the fulness of times,' are subsidiary to the world-wide proclamation of Christianity. All human resources are combined on this principle: all are engaged, however unwittingly, in scooping out the bed of this sea of glory, which shall engulph the old world, and form the new, 'in which dwelleth righteousness.'

The family an ordinance of Providence.

The aspects of Providence in regard to *family* life, are susceptible of a similar interpretation. The doctrine of the Bible is emphatically that of *family* providence, specially directed to religious objects. In the beginning of the race, two great divisions are set before us: that of Abel, or Seth, and that of Cain,—the holy seed, the sacred line—or the sons of God, and the sons of men. All revelation and all religion started from a *family*. Adam is more than the father of the race: he is the representative and the depositary of its religion, its morals, and its destiny. Noah is more than the second head of the world: he is a party to a covenant with God on behalf of his offspring, and 'the heir of the righteousness of faith,' as well as of the globe and its resources, for himself and for them. Abraham obtains from God more than a grant of the land of his sojourn: he is justified by faith, and

made 'the father of many nations,'[1] and above all, —the progenitor of the Messiah.

A shadow of Creation.

Frequent and special are the Scripture notices of *families* in connection with the course of Providence. Hence, the Messiah is introduced by his pedigree; and in him, it is said, 'shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'[2] But, to omit further instances of this sort in proof of the family aspects of Providence, the very constitution of the family and its offices for human nature are too remarkable to be overlooked. Unquestionably, in the family constitution there is shown a wondrous image of Deity in His relation to man, and in that of man to Deity —a miniature of creation as it stands between God and man: a truth at once suggestive of a designed correspondence between the divine and the human in principle and result. To paternity and sovereignty, dependence and obligation stand as correlatives. The paternal and the filial *morale* are the reflexes of the Scripture *morale* in its application to man. Hence, it appears how thoroughly the theory of human life is identified with Religion. *Derived being, with its tissue of relations and moral consequences, is but the constant reassertion of these doctrines of creation*, in their all-comprising and unalterable force on the conduct and destiny of our race. Even the intent of the marriage bond, with its indissolubility, interpreted by Scripture, is to secure 'a holy seed;' while in the New Testament it is exalted to shadow forth the mystery of Christ and his Church.

Human love the type of the divine.

If the family economy has failed to bear this character and to insure these results, this is surely

[1] Rom. iv. 17. [2] Gen. xii. 3.

no argument against the reality and the wisdom of its arrangements. The failure, so far as it has gone, only shows the fearful force of the moral disorder which has infected the race, and perverted the plans and gifts of infinite benevolence into the means of rebellion and destruction.

Yet, after all, how much of the virtue and the good of human life has, throughout its history, sprung from this one source? Rarely, if ever, has the tyranny of crime swept them utterly from a land, or even from a single human bosom. Those who have most flagitiously violated the claims of man upon man—the pirate, the robber, and even the murderer himself—have not often shown the utter death of this *punctum saliens*, and, as it were, test of humanity. When the action of the social nature of man, in its wider sphere, has ceased, it still has, in some measure, its narrower focus of life—its last sanctuary in the bosom of its born-instincts and life-blood. The deepest lines of the Creator's image are traced in *love*. In fatherhood, maternity, and filiation, lie the fountains of tenderness which break out from the heart petrified by vice and barbarism, rough and desert-like to the eyes of all but its own. In the family heart we see—like the source of the four rivers which made paradise of old—the undying germ of humanity, the staple of public morals, and even the rudiments of religion. It *is* religion in its purely human aspect, just as polity is; but far more intensely, as it is individualizing and primary—the very soul of life.

Indeed, it is difficult to conceive how the radical ideas of religion could be implanted in man, but for the action of the family system. Human affections

and human obligations must precede the affections and obligations which have God for their object. Nature must be schooled in the lower, ere it can be transferred to the higher sphere of knowledge. 'If a man,' says St John, 'love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'[1] The argument here is applicable to the entire sphere of human affections in its aspects toward religion, as well as to the specific form of it which it was meant to enforce. All our ideas and moral sentiments respecting God have their origin in the constitution and play of human nature. This mystic ladder, whose top reaches to heaven, springs from the earth. The celestial is a graft on the terrestrial; the stream returns to its fountain; and God is 'all in all.'

Moral aspects of Providence.

It is important also to notice the *moral* aspects of Providence, as these are to be gathered from the facts of man's condition.

Its probationary character.

(1.) These determine the *probationary* condition of man: by which is meant proof or experiment of humanity in the moral sense, and with a view to the final judicial awards of good and evil. All the facts of human life, whether individual or corporate, evince this character: they are resolvable into the great *moral rationale* of human life—RELIGION. Throughout Scripture, this is the one doctrine pre-eminent, both as to individuals and nations. The Bible is not only the great oracle of this truth, but the exponent of its principles, methods, and results. The weights and the balance of supreme equity are applied to the man and the mass, the unit and the million, with the same unfailing precision, and the

[1] 1 John iv. 20.

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same mighty behest. 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.'[1] 'What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? . . . . that Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?'[2]

The means and instruments of this rule are everywhere largely furnished by Providence, which, in truth, is a system kept in motion for this very purpose. Responsibility is inseparable from all gifts, and discipline from every fortune. The heart of a man and the heart of an empire lie equally open to the eyes of 'the Watchers;' and the process of trial, as applied to both, includes the complex influences of the whole mundane system, but especially of human nature upon itself.

Its long-suffering.

(2.) The prevalence of kindness, benignity, and long-suffering, is impressed on the course of Providence in an immense, unsparing, outpouring of benefits on the world. According to St Paul, the course of nature toward the heathen left not God 'without witness' among them, even while he suffered them 'to walk in their own ways.'[3] 'He did them good, and sent them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.' The Psalms are particularly marked by the prevalence of this noble doctrine; and their practical summary is thus delivered: 'Whoso is wise and will understand these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.'[4]

Thus, all nature is but God's ordinance; God's mirror to man's eye; God's minstrelsy to man's ear; God's liturgy to man's soul. The world is

[1] Prov. xv. 3.
[2] Job vii. 17, 18.
[3] Acts xiv. 17.
[4] Ps. cvii. 43.

goodness full-faced and open-handed, looking out of everything above, about, and beneath us: it meets us everywhere, plies us by a thousand arts, and turns even sense into a richer blessing. The world, even as it is, is a storehouse of indulgence far outreaching the scant measure of necessity, or the parsimony which makes existence a hardship, and little better than a soul-imprisonment in flesh. This goodness is no ally of innocency, and no guardian of loyalty to Heaven: its smile is not reserved for virtue, nor its frown for wickedness. None may challenge its prescriptions as their desert—none live hapless by its ban.

Without affirming that the moral element in Providence is held by goodness in abeyance, it is plain matter-of-fact, that it gloriously overbears the stern principles of award, rejoicing, to use a scripture phrase, 'against judgment.'[1] Hence, the general observation, that Providence is, morally speaking, an anomaly—a riddle—a trial to faith—a plea of presumption—a great practical difficulty with men of all creeds. This the Bible recognises, while it offers a solution of its own. Specially does it impress the moral of Providence in language such as this: 'Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?'[2] The profoundest lesson of Providence is found in this single passage: in truth, it is its very gospel, and the proper counterpart, as it is the reflection, of the gospel of grace. The human heart is most accessible to goodness, opening to its charm when all other forces are powerless: nor would it

[1] James ii. 13. [2] Rom. ii. 4.

be possible to bring our nature under its richest influence, unless this feature were predominant in the course of Providence. Providence, in this view, is *the initiatory school of Religion;* its reigning facts and features with respect to man containing the germs of the highest final truths, *which must first spring up within us*, or the seed of the kingdom cannot follow. Experience qualifies us to appreciate testimony, and knowledge is the precursor of faith. Our instincts and persuasions are more ready and powerful than reasonings and proofs, which are as useless as they are difficult, when removed from the basis of our antecedent beliefs. As 'there is no fear in love,' so there is no religion in fear, because 'fear hath torment:' it belongs to the *penal state*, not to the *probationary*, the essential element of which is love. 'God is love;' and the religion which prepares man for eternal fellowship with Him must not only embody this in the word, but in an economy of Providence harmonious with itself: one oracle must sound from both—'GOD is LOVE.'

Its disciplinary character.

(3.) The moral aspect of Providence is *disciplinary* and *corrective*. Treating our nature as *infantile* as well as evil, Providence uses the rod to imprint lessons on our souls through our flesh, which cannot otherwise be effectually dealt with. The rein is put upon desire, and the fuel withheld from what would otherwise be quenchless ambition. Passions fledged for reckless courses are clipped by adversities, and compelled with bated breath to wait on better counsels. Indolence is roused into action by necessity, and rashness tamed into prudence by failure. Poverty inures to hardship and patience;

and riches, while they foster pride and false security, have their counterpoise in the heavy care and restlessness they entail on their possessors. Even the varying frames of our mind and body are vicissitudes as complementary to the economy of life as are those of the weather and the seasons of the year. Health is an indulgence often abused, and sickness a medicine meant to bring cure. Pain and sorrow are soul-purgatives, and means of grace; while death—dark, abhorred, inexorable death—which brings up the rear of this train of human ills, has, like the Roman Janus, a different face to that turned toward us. The mightiest tyrant and keenest searcher of the heart, the inquisitor of conscience, the plague of guilt, and the enemy of our flesh; it is Heaven's voucher for man's apostasy, and its own resistless justice—'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'

Its penal character.

(4.) *Penal.* This feature of Providence is involved in the former. Correction is penalty, only differing in degree and objects from the awards of an unmixed and ultimate justice. It is not *wrath* in its earlier stages, but becomes wrath when resisted and provoked by the incorrigible impiety of offenders. There is a point beyond which nations or individuals cease to become, in any sense, 'vessels of mercy;' they pass into another denomination—'vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.' In Scripture, national visitations are presented to us in both these views. Space is given for repentance; and the final blow that deals out destruction, like the rod of iron on the potter's vessel, is suspended till the season of gracious reprieve comes to an end, and the intended means of recovery have been ex-

pended. The cup sent by the hand of Jeremiah to the nations, at God's command, respected them all as guilty before Him, and, therefore, compelled to drink off their own deserts. Thus, more particularly, was Israel, though a prince with God, doomed to expiate his sin, after the day of forbearance and recovering visitation had closed. As it regards both nations and individuals, divine judgments are just so far penal as they either abate, or aggravate, the moral depravity of men. Judgments either stimulate or repress evil. Under no other conditions than the plagues could Pharaoh's heart have been hardened to that degree of impious resistance which brought on his destruction; nor could any but the most superlative favours have hardened the 'evil heart of unbelief' in Israel to the same result.

Providence is, throughout, a moral discipline, and a testing process, which, whether of correction or indulgence, is ruled altogether by its action on the heart: by this it passes on to final awards. Death is a signal example of this truth: the same in its physical aspects toward all, its penal character altogether hinges on the moral state of the man overtaken by its stroke. The same event has two entirely different sides, just as the final judgment has to those on the right hand and on the left. Good and evil are *essentially* the moral states of the soul; but so far as these belong to our *condition*, they are simply the vouchers of omniscient righteousness to this higher truth, and estimate of its importance.

Providence harmonizes only with Mediation.

This cursory view of the characteristics of Providence shows that human life is, throughout, made sacred to *Religion*, and that its features are *decidedly*

mediational. It *consists* with this doctrine, and with no other. It would seem, that not only have the relations and agencies of Providence, but the constitution of man also has been forecasted from this starting point. The conditions of the globe, and of nature generally, show a pre-adaptation to our race *as it is*, and not as it would have been had its primitive uprightness been retained. The idea also of a moral dependence so portentous as that involved in the federal origin of the race, could never have been adopted as the law under which an endless series of human beings should have been brought into life, had not the same idea been applied *as its antithesis, in some remedial provision anticipative of a moral failure.* Such a principle implied its fellow; and that not merely remedial, but perfective.

Individual life subordinate to race-life.

Thus, the very foundations of human nature were laid in a system not isolated, or *complete in itself.* Individual personality and individual accountability were ideas subordinate to those of *race-unity* and *race-representation.* Its members had no separate and independent position, any more than the stones of which a building is composed have a separate significance out of their positions. Each and every one stood in equal and perpetual relation, not to its predecessor merely, but to the first of the series, who influenced the nearest and the most distant of his offspring alike.

It is easy to see that such a scheme of life *must be mediational;* that its true character can only appear when this is steadily regarded; and that it implies an economy of ruling force very complex, and sweeping far beyond the present state of man.

Such a doctrine alone can explain why so much of human life runs to waste in premature decease—in buds which never flower, and flowers which never fruit. This alone explains why (to use a scripture phrase) 'all men are made in vain;'[1] or another, why 'the creature was made subject to vanity:'[2] why its fortunes war with its instincts: why death riots in its spoils, and the world affords man no home but the grave. The resurrection and the life immortal are the only antithesis possible to this condition of human nature. These are the last things in the order of God, but the first in the constitution of man. The theory of life, morally and physiologically considered, presupposes them, but they are only 'brought to *light* by the gospel.'

Family life proofs of mediatorial rule.

(5.) The *family* life of man '*consists*' *most perfectly with mediational relations.* This, in certain aspects at least, is antagonistic to the fall. The family economy, for example, is evidently prospective of a mediational regime: it forecasts the power of the moral pravity in man arising from his federal damage, and provides a powerful antidote to this degeneracy. The instincts, affections, relations, and obligations proper to such an economy, raise up a mighty breakwater to this desolating flood. A certain domain of our nature, of unspeakable value, is preserved, if not intact, yet by no means a moral waste.

The *recoverableness of man to God* is mainly dependent on the phases of his nature bound up in the family constitution. There is still something found in man, though apostate, which, if not in the religious sense virtue, is the basis of virtue, and a

[1] Ps. lxxxix. 47. [2] Rom. viii. 20.

sine quâ non for the implantation of its divinest forms. Not only do the noblest exhibitions of the parental and filial principles, but even the mediocre and mutilated expression of them in the world's history, do much to redeem humanity from absolute monstrosity, and the race from the vengeance of Heaven. It would seem that, to a large extent, God designed that men should be taught the virtues that bind society together by the force of their constitutional instincts; and that this power, as being the strongest and most uniform in its operation, was lodged in them in prospect of their apostasy, with a view of retaining some hold on their nature, under the workings of its moral distemper. The *foundations* of religion and virtue were placed beyond the reach of overthrow, when they themselves were most completely demolished; as if God had said to man's delinquency, as to the waves of the sea, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther;' or, to use the words of the prophet, 'In measure, when it springeth forth, wilt thou debate with it?'[1]

Human nature unfolded by mediatorial offices.

If there be truth in these remarks, it is clear that they point to *mediational purposes*. The evil which God restrains, he intends to counterwork and destroy. He has left scope for the application of remedial measures, because he has provided them. *The condition* of man is made answerable to *the designs* of Heaven, whose wisdom as well as benevolence shines forth in this admirable adaptation of the one to the other. Hence, whatever of goodness, or semblance of it in man, has survived his fall by means of his constitution and its relations, be it more or less, is clearly mediational, since his

[1] Isa. xxvii. 8.

nature is so constituted, and its *prospective* developments are all based upon it. If it inhere in these apart from an infusion of grace (a question not here to be discussed), it is because that nature and its relations are unfolded *under mediational offices*, and not under their primitive federal aspects; so that the very *antecedents* of remedial agency are, in fact, of itself, and are as the shadows which imply the objects they represent, however far standing in the rear.

National life an ordinance of mediation.

(6.) The *national* form of human life also signally *consists with mediational truths*. This seems the most gracious expedient for retrieving the original benediction, 'Replenish the earth, and subdue it.' As an organism fitted to occupy and improve territory, to elicit all the more hidden resources of nature, to expand the human faculties, and to elevate man to his original position as lord of the world, national life is the ordinance of providential goodness, and the orb of providential wisdom. Government, commerce, agriculture, arts, sciences, and civic economy—all things that advance and perfects man socially and intellectually—take their rise from this source. Above all, so far as it serves to promote the knowledge of God, to conserve and circulate his word, and thus demonstrably to subserve the reign of Christ over the world, the national ordinance is of the highest value, and bears upon it the stamp of the Sovereign Mediator.

Hence, not only national position, but national existence, are ruled by mediational policy. National progress, national chastening, national overthrow, are all events resolvable into the same elements of destiny. The theocracy of the Bible exhibits the principles which, in various degrees and methods,

rule Gentiles in their national capacity as well as Jews. Nations have been, and still are, scourged and ruined for their sins. One nation is made the instrument of vengeance upon another—and this may be its predestined work; but no nation can retain a foremost place amongst its fellows which lacks the elements most necessary *to do them good*, or, in other words, to advance virtue and religion: while, on the other hand, those most unfit for, and hostile to these ends, are under the ban, and doomed to wane.

It hardly need be insisted on at length, how emphatically the nations are by Scripture said to be subject to the dominion of Christ. This is, undoubtedly, to be ranked among the forms of the 'all power given to him in heaven and in earth.' He is said to have the 'heathen given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession' (Ps. ii. 8); and hence he is represented as exercising his supremacy agreeably to the character of his subjects: 'Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron: thou shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' As 'the Prince of the kings of the earth,' he warns them: 'Be wise therefore, O ye kings.'

Christ the Head of all nations.

Politically, power is a trust received from Christ, of which account must be rendered to him. Power is thus a sacred thing, and its abuse, as well as resistance to it when lawfully exercised, a damnable offence. Government has not merely the sanction of religion generally, but of Christianity very specially. *Christ is the universal national Head; and the principles and spirit of his religion are the perfection of national rule.* They proscribe no principle necessary to national honour and independence:

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they promote neither arrogancy nor subserviency. They weaken not the hand of the ruler for righteous action, much less infringe the charter of public rights. Patriotism is a holier, and therefore a stronger fire, when lit from this altar, than when kindled by an earth-born passion. Justice is more awful when administered according to the dictates of the Christian oracles; and the policy of states is more wise and profitable when it is the echo of Christian truth, and not the offspring of the passions and prejudices of men.

The obedience due to him as such.

Without prescribing to any nation the type of its polity, much less the recognition of itself as a state power, Christianity holds, in reality, a far more exalted supremacy, and exerts a far more powerful influence, when it pervades and purifies the public mind, moulds public opinion in harmony with itself, and combines all the interior workings of society, as well as all international intercourse, with an inviolable respect to the authority of its moral code. To the natural obligations of men to uphold their national estate as a heritage from God, to their sense of its utility and preciousness, and their veneration for the traditional forms of their social life, Christianity superadds its own doctrine of *the national dependence of men on Christ*, and their obligation to acknowledge him and to do him service. They are laid under the strongest motives, when professing his religion, to the observance of truth, justice, and benevolence, in the broadest sense. Their public offices are *religious duties*, as being the functions of his supreme rule, and conscience in its holiest behests is made the arbiter and guide of all, both small and great.

This dependence of man's national life on the Mediator very specially proscribes certain enormities of a strange proneness to which man's history convicts him. The lust of conquest is one of these: the passion to enslave his fellows is another: both are offences against the fundamental principles of national and social life; but especially, are affronts of the most provoking kind, as offered to the *man-loving, man-restoring* Power that rules the world, whose aim is to disenthral and bless it.

The Sabbath Christ's ordinance.

This connection of national life with Christ, places also THE SABBATH in a relation to national duty, and national welfare, of the utmost importance. The Sabbath is Christ's law, bound up with national welfare very essentially, and imperative upon all nations which receive his religion, and consequently his national sway. This may not bind them to legislation for its support beyond the civil action of the ordinance, since religious duty must be a personal matter; but the public recognition of the Sabbath as a day of rest and religion is a national duty, for it is *a standing act of homage to Christ as the King of nations, and a striking token of his mediatorial sway.* The very benignity of it as His Rest, and a weekly banner raised against the overflowing of the curse in excessive labour both to man and beast, carries its own appeal to hearts closed against the higher arguments of religion. Its *philanthropy* is a telling fact as to the *character* of the Supreme Ruler, as showing the excellency of his 'loving-kindness,' who spreads over all creatures 'the shadow of his wings.'

To these observations it may be added, that the relation of national life to Christ, taken in connec-

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National Providence in alliance with Christianity.

tion with his religion, unfolds the benignant office of his Providence. That Providence, indeed, bears the same world-wide characters; but its full power to bless men is not brought out but as it is the handmaid of his religion. *As a mediational administration, Providence must be in necessary alliance with Christianity, with respect to its national bearings and blessings.* The whole style of prophetic language, though highly figurative, shows this. There is a beauty and a glory in these poetic pictures of Christ's kingdom in its *national aspects*, which all must feel. 'When the earth is established,' and 'the mountain of the Lord's house is exalted;' then 'the trees clap their hands;' 'the seas roar,' and 'the heavens rejoice;' 'the hurtful thing' is gone; and the holy mountain is as much the abode of innocency and bliss as heaven itself. 'The earth yields her increase,' and 'the clouds drop fatness;' 'the fruitful field is counted for a forest;' and 'the ploughman overtakes the reaper.' The city is 'a quiet resting-place;' and the work of righteousness is peace, and its effect 'quietness and assurance for ever.' (Isa. xxxii. 17.)

National Providence administered for moral ends.

(7.) The *moral* discipline of Providence is also mediational. Its *mixed* nature attests this very fully. It *consists* not with a state either of human innocency or of judicial abandonment. This is true both of nations and individuals. The principles which apply to the one are equally applicable to the other. Forbearance and long-suffering are the leading features of Providence toward both. The times and the measures of judicial visitation are subordinate to the purposes of goodness, and are but the last resorts of incensed sovereignty when its

clemency has been spent on men in vain. The parable of the fig-tree is a true exposition of the principles on which Christ rules the world, and not the Jews only. With respect to nations, such a rule shows that men are in no cases summarily dealt with; that an accumulation of guilt is permitted; and that the course of trial prescribed is by no means uniform, or reducible to any measure of ours. It shows that men are ruled with a view to ulterior results, and not according to their present demerits, or even their present virtues; that as to nations, this rule regards them relatively, as well as in the abstract; and that as to individuals, it regards them solely in reference to a *future life*.

Mediatorial rule only partially retributary.

It has been commonly and truly taught, that the lack of a strictly retributory character in Providence demonstrates the necessity of a final administration of exact justice answerable to the perfection of the divine government. But this inference, however valid, is less forcible than that which rests on the establishment of the doctrine that the existing rule over man is *purely mediational*, and therefore cannot be one purely retributory in its awards to virtue or vice. Such a rule would be inconsistent with its very nature, which is one grand experiment on the race adjusted to its *moral* condition, and one which presses into the furtherance of its benevolent designs all the resources of the system by which man is surrounded. The same doctrine is also applied with double force to evince the certainty of a final retribution, however distant, and standing off from the present theatre of Christ's rule. The reasons which show that judgment is now precluded, also show that it is but *suspended*,

to give scope for a prior economy, whose very existence, based as it is on the pre-existing moral system of the universe, can only be intermediate to an ultimate consummation by the administration of rewards and punishments.

Suffering indispensable to a state of discipline.

Thus, the doctrine of a mediational Providence demonstrates the same doctrine with superior force, and throws an equal light on the peculiarity of our present state, which otherwise must have remained a mystery. Providence, as *mediational*, shows us that, since life is especially probationary, and therefore disciplinary, the lessons of Providence are all adapted to the state of our nature, and intended to aid in its recovery. In such a system, evil, in the sense of suffering, whether mental or physical, is indispensable. The plagues and sores of life are its medicaments. The stubborn bent of our nature to apostasy, to multiply and cleave to its idols, and to banish God from his own heart-domain in man, must be encountered by other appliances than those of indulgence. Man must be taught by stern experience, and a common lot, that it is an 'evil thing and a bitter' to have departed from 'the fountain of living waters,' and to have hewn to himself 'broken cisterns, that can hold no water.'[1] To seek our good in the creature, and our end in the world; to make life one long holiday, entertainment, and revelry, from which all counter-influences and facts should be barred out, is the fondest bent of nature, from childhood and onwards, which feels neither the sin nor the curse of separation from God. It neither perceives nor bewails the death of its highest powers, while absorbed in the world of sense;

[1] Jer. ii. 13.

and the loss of that heritage of immortality and divine fruition, without which its very existence is as baseless as are all its dreams of good.

When of old God would give his people Canaan for their rest, he first led them into the desert, and there by a course of discipline sought to train them for his purpose; and such is still his dealing, in the broadest sense, with men as redeemed, but particularly with his 'called and chosen.' Providence is in inseparable alliance with Grace, and in a high degree instrumental in accomplishing its designs: 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.'[1] 'Tribulation worketh patience.'[2] The reason why the creatures cannot 'separate us from the love of Christ' is, that they cannot countervail the power of Christ: they are but his ordinances and instruments, of whatever kind: they all form but one system of which he is the Head; and which, therefore, cannot but 'work together for good to them that love God.'[3]

[1] Prov. iii. 12. [2] Rom. v. 3. [3] Rom. ix. 28.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DOMINION OF CHRIST OVER MAN—*continued.*

The Moral Law.

THE second view of the Mediator's rule over man is its application of the Moral Law to his nature—a subject of vast interest and momentous bearings. It includes the personal relation of every human being to the divine rule, with all its train of consequences here and hereafter. It is, indeed, difficult to grasp a subject of such magnitude as this: it is so profound in its application to the nature, condition, and prospects of universal man; so thoroughly at the root of all the phenomena of his history, whether internal, social, or cosmical; and exhibiting such unvarying phases throughout the track of humanity over the earth, that to contemplate this *regime* is to contemplate the whole world in the very fountain and issues of its moral life.

The relations of the Moral Law toward man federally.

(1.) The primary aspect of this rule is toward man *federally*, since it is certain that Scripture represents this as lying at the foundation of human existence, and as determining its preliminary conditions, both moral and physical. This doctrine has, however, been so largely opened in an early chapter of this inquiry, that little more is necessary than to add, that the relations of human nature as such to the divine law, not merely suppose the

existence of mediational relations, but the *results* of the Mediator's prerogatives in actual operation; so as to place our nature as a whole, judicially and morally, in the condition best adapted to mediational purposes.

Man born in a remedial condition.

That condition, when thus examined, seems necessarily a mixed one, as the result of a mixed economy. As our nature is not *de jure*, so neither is it *de facto*, born under the full ban of justice. It is not, though 'shapen in iniquity,' the seed of wrath and perdition; for 'the free gift cometh upon all men to justification of life.' When, therefore, we are said to be 'by nature the children of wrath,' it is not our birth-sin abstractedly which is regarded as the spring of this character and doom, but the force of *uncorrected nature operating habits of evil-doing*. It was quite enough for the Apostle's purpose, to show that the *actual* state of men was one of condemnation, and quite superfluous to have carried his statement back to their birth-sin, charging their guilt wholly on their *nature;* for it is manifest that his doctrine is against this notion, when he declares that men 'do by *nature* the things contained in the law.' But if the ban of law upon our nature—namely, death in its most terrible sense—be restrained by the prerogative of the Mediator as the fountain of all *law*, as well as of all grace to man; it is clear that death as a physical evil bears a mitigated aspect as being a mere preamble to the resurrection. In this relation, it is only so far penal as it is *privative*, and as it implies a lowered status of our nature; but it bears no penalty to individuals, except as it is connected with a state of unforgiven sin; while, even in this

aspect, it is made correspondent with the condition of our moral nature, and the restorative objects of our probation. As a decree of justice, and an award to sin, death is thrown back to a distance from life, and is not, as a rule, allowed to make a prey of it at once. The physical continuance of the race, indeed, demands this; but this fact is itself resolvable by the same reasoning as that which applies to individual life, namely, the development of the remedial economy by Christ as its Author and Finisher. In some sense or degree, there must be federal sin imputed to us, or there could be no imputation of federal punishment; but its full force is intercepted by the 'justification unto life,' and is rendered consonant with, nay, indispensable to the operation of remedial grace.

The bias to evil not destructive of moral liberty.

The same observation is applicable also to the *moral* view of human nature as such. Doubtless, there is such a thing as inborn propension to evil; that is, what may be called an elementary anomaly in nature—a want of harmony with the moral sense—a contrariety to goodness *as a whole;* not, indeed, *to all its verisimilitudes*, but to the divine image as the perfection of it, the substance and standard of all creature excellency. Appetite and passion are in the ascendant over reason and truth. Self-love, self-will, and self-sufficiency, are indigenous springs of self-government which furnish a prevailing antagonism to the true normal condition of our nature and its felicity.

But this diseased and anomalous state of our nature is not such as to destroy altogether its moral liberty, and its consequent accountability. These ideas are everywhere prominent in the Bible, and

in the familiar language of mankind. The practice of virtue is, indeed, rendered difficult, and at best very imperfect; while the temptations to vice derive a proportionate strength by this warp of nature from a constitutional rectitude and aptness to duty. Were these obliquities adventitious, and not things *à priori*—the effects of immaturity, or of exterior influences—*education* should be the unfailing corrective, and experience the compensating power for the maintenance of practical goodness in men. But facts show far otherwise. Nature may be self-perverted, it is true, though faultlessly constituted; but none can fairly affirm that habitual evil is a prodigy in the moral history of a human being: it is rather what from the status of his nature may be anticipated, though not necessitated. He may 'learn to do well,' though more likely he will learn 'to do evil.'

Inborn evil correlative with redemption.

The importance of the subject which involves the condition under which we receive our nature as such, is too obvious to require enforcing: it has always been felt and reasoned upon as fundamental to any system of theology, whether theoretic or practical; while the views entertained respecting it have been as various and perplexing as the subject is profound. These have, however, been generally ruled less by the statements of Scripture than by some preconceived opinions, or *ex parte* views of the great doctrine of redemption. Hence, we have moderate or extreme tenets on the moral nature of man, as redemption is held to be particular or general, or even merely figurative; or as these, again, are modified to obviate difficulties with which this or that theory may be clogged. It seems, however,

safest, when treating such a subject, to avoid too exact and minute analysis, based on systems either of mental philosophy, or of dogmatic theology; and to regard it chiefly as a *fact* both of consciousness and of Scripture testimony, and one to be looked at *invariably in the light of Christ's redemption.* This places him at the head of human nature as such; and therefore, determines that *all its moral relations to the Deity, and its moral phenomena as flowing from them, are solely the behests of his prerogatives.*

The seed of good given to all.

Hence, whatever be the moral aspects of our nature and its workings, they must be *consistent with mediational objects*, since they directly flow from these relations, and exist merely for the sake of their development. The features of such a rule cannot, *on the whole*, be contrary to the grace that created it, and to the characters of its human history. The solution of the mystery of man in this respect may lie beyond our present knowledge, but its general benignity is settled by doctrines of wider import, and of ready application. Our nature is not only not an immedicable, but is to some extent already a medicated thing. The inborn good antagonizes the inborn evil. 'This light lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' It more than meets him on the threshold or afterwards; it *prefaces* his entrance to the stage of life: it is his birth-star, and the brightness of that day which, but for it, had been as Job's birth-day as he wished it, 'veiled in darkness and the shadow of death.'

This application of the *via media* to the moral state of human nature, viewed as the fruit of the Atonement in its broadest extent, and the rule founded on it, stands equally clear of the extremes

of pelagianism and necessity. It implies a seminal power of goodness—small, it may be, as a grain of mustard-seed—which may grow into a great tree, or wither from its root: it is salt cast into the fountain, which may heal the waters, or be henceforth 'good for nothing.' This is the alternative awaiting the agent, and the purport of 'the free gift.' Nature thus licensed, may be either marred or mended. Descending from its primeval matrix to generations and individuals, it is a material tractable to agencies and influences both relative and personal—good and evil. The *results* of this mixed character of our nature and its agencies, especially if taken apart from remedial appliances, would hardly have been anticipated as answerable to this theory; but neither do they disprove its truthfulness, any more than the history of an individual may be taken as precluding an alternative either better or worse, or than the actual results of Christianity in the world are to be taken as the measure of its purposes or its power.

The early development of moral consciousness.

To this it may be added, that the phenomena of moral consciousness are decidedly in favour of this view of the *born* state of humanity. For are not all prepared to admit the existence of conscience in a moral sense?—that moral principles or instincts are just as original parts of our constitution as the reason itself, or what is called common sense? These may be *developed* by culture and experience; but they are certainly *implanted* by neither. Moral judgments, however crude and inadequate, rise within us just as early and decidedly as the operations of the intellect, and are as inseparable from

the consciousness which gives them a personal application as those of riper years. Instead of the *moral* of our nature being an adventitious thing, or even an after-growth, it is rather the *earliest* in its development, not only taking precedence of the intellect in the *order*, but in the *strength* of its promptings. Is it not far easier to appeal to this power in a child, than to its reason—to its innate sense of right and wrong, than to its *knowledge* of these and other things? Does it not seem that the senses and the moral powers, though holding the extreme points in our nature, were in closer contact with each other than either of them is with the reason, and that they were meant to supply the basis and conditions of its development; so that all its conclusions at variance with these parts of our constitution, should be held invalid, misleading, and dangerous?

Conscience a witness in the most depraved.

Is it not also true, that whatever propensity to evil men indulge, or however wide they may rove from virtue, this is to them a reproving witness and a condemning judge? They are, however reluctant, compelled in some sense *to vindicate nature*, while they condemn themselves. At least they must admit, that though there be two principles in them, each struggling for dominion, their own will is umpire in the struggle, and turns the balance in the wrong direction; and that they are brought, in consequence, into captivity to the 'law of sin in their members,' even while delighting in 'the law of God after the inner man.' This inner man is the conscience, the reason, the arbitrating power, forming *the sanctuary of our nature*, which has been impiously violated by imperious lust.

The doctrine which assumes that humanity is only a lump of evil, clearly discharges men from the guilt of *debasing it by habits of sinfulness*, and turns conscience into a *false witness ;*—a most inexplicable phenomenon truly, since its testimony is against ourselves. On such an assumption, in vain has it been written by inspiration, that ' the Gentiles not having the law, are a law unto themselves ;' that they show ' the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences bearing them witness, and their thoughts in the meantime' (or rather mutually) ' accusing or else excusing one another.'[1] In vain, too, on this theory, have men of thoughtfulness and wisdom in all ages been jealous for the purity of youth ; in vain sought both to guard it from evil and to prescribe for it guidance in virtue, if it were impossible to deteriorate nature. Such prudence had been but folly—such labour but sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind.

On the other hand, the doctrine of nature's innocency is as strongly disproved as that of its invincible depravity: it contradicts not only Scripture, but universal experience and universal consciousness. The charge of innate sinfulness is not spurned by men as a calumny, because they feel that it is not a fiction. It is not admitted, because it is pleasant, or even conventional, to deal in self-detraction and voluntary humility, but because it is the echo of every bosom to the oracle of Heaven, which compels *this* homage to its authority, and this record, living and universal, of our need of mercy and mediation.

(2.) We look at the operation of the moral law

[1] Rom. ii.

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All men amenable to some measure of Law.

administered by Christ on man as *a responsible agent*. This administration consists in depositing in his mind universally some seeds of truth and goodness —some rudiments of a moral code to which his conscience declares him amenable. Some rule of right and wrong is set up within him, comprising some fragment, at least, of God's perfect law, and so deeply enthroned, that the utmost force of corrupt tradition and personal aversion is insufficient for its extinction. There is a felt authority, an inherent power of direction and restraint in this common law, as we may call it, of humanity, which it may not comprehend, but which it cannot dispute, much less subvert. Though not independent of culture and circumstance, and requiring, as it supposes, *a complementary system* in accordance with the social properties of man, it is, in point of fact, anterior to all these, and, in comparative isolation from them, holds a real, though a doubtful sway.

It is indeed true, that *the measure* in which this rule is applied to individual man, as well as his susceptibility to its claims, is boundlessly various; but we may more than doubt whether, in any specimens of the race, it ever has been, or is now, utterly ignored; else the claims of such as specimens, to the human nature, may be disallowed. At any rate, the exceptions, if such there be, prove the rule, since the absence of what has in all ages been held proper to man, can no more invalidate its reality, than the existence of a race of idiots can invalidate the claims of the race to the honours of reason.

The gift of a rule supposes also the power to apply and illustrate it. It implies an universal

The indestructibleness of moral consciousness.

conscience, though varying in power with the extent to which the rule is present in any given instance, and the susceptibility with which conscience is endowed. It is here most eminently that our nature is in contact with the divine. As the eye of the soul, conscience receives the light of heaven, and reciprocates its relations to a Supreme Presence. This is its proper office, which, when perverted, is thus described by the Saviour: 'If the light within thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!'[1] That a consummation so terrible as this may occur in an individual, or even in masses of men, at certain stages of personal or national wickedness, is implied in this testimony, and endorsed by matter-of-fact. It could hardly have been otherwise with many of the Jews to whom our Lord addressed himself, and it clearly was with the heathen, as described in the Epistle to the Romans: these were given over to 'a reprobate mind,' to do 'the things which were not convenient.'[2] This is true also to a fearful extent of the peoples of heathenism to this day: their lands, overspread with the darkness of countless centuries, and steeped in the lethean waters which ever form its infernal accompaniment, seem all but lost to the faintest touches of a moral consciousness. Scarcely can they be said to war against truth and righteousness, or to be captives to the prince of evil: they are the enfranchised subjects of his dominion, less tempted than possessed of Satan, and exhibiting rather an impersonation of the arch-fiend than a family likeness to 'the Spirit of error,' there seen fully arrayed against 'the Spirit of truth.' That

[1] Matt. vi. 23.

[2] Rom. i. 28.

inborn light which inspiration assures us appertains to the whole world of man, is, when ushered into this realm of gross darkness, more than antagonized: it seems well nigh extinguished. It lacks all medium for expansion. As light without an atmosphere, repressed and shut up within what is but a province of the distempered soul, and the source of the 'outer darkness' of the world; it is met by a double antagonism, and saved from annihilation only by the presence of the power that gave it birth.

These statements, however, only involve the question of the *degree* in which moral principles may be suppressed, and also the kindred question of accountability, whenever the conventional standard is so contrary to the moral, and the voice of collective man to the conscience of an individual. That some basis exists for human accountability, must be affirmed, whatever be the relative aspects of human nature; because, however built into the social structure, its *individuality* is not by this means destroyed. As no man's person is merely a duplicate of his fellow's, so neither are his acts necessarily the reflections of theirs. As he cannot be *represented* in his virtues or vices, so neither can the springs of theirs be morally transferred or superseded by his contiguity to the million. Although corruption may be aided by influences from without, and the pressure of society upon the individual comes with an all but overwhelming force; yet is the history of vice or virtue, after all, a personal matter, and their most secret workings things of distinct personal consciousness.

Such is the testimony of man to himself, and

Its position in the nature of man.

such is the testimony of man to man, as rendered in the laws and languages of his social intercourse. It is also matter of devout regard, that the principles antagonistic to human corruption should have been planted so deeply in the higher nature of man, his conscience and reason, since these are confessedly the domain of *authority* in his nature. Thus sentence against crime is insured from a tribunal within man's own breast; and in the first instance, at least, the process of judgment is made to issue from the high places of his own soul. Disorganized as his nature is, and broken and partial as is the edition of the law within him, he is yet competent to keep court within himself, and to hale himself to 'the powers that be;' his conscience being commissioned to try his ways, and adjudicate on his demerits, though its awards may fail to bring him to repentance, or to abate his bent to evil: 'Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.'[1]

Combination of Law and Grace under mediation.

(3.) It is pertinent to this tenor of remark to add, that the office of the moral law in man, as administered by Christ, whether it operate as a rule of direction or restraint, is always associated with *a dispensation of grace.* The very misgivings and dread with which evil is approached, at least in the earlier stages of experience, however strong the temptation to entertain it—the mixture of desire and aversion felt toward it—the alternate advance and retreat—the remonstrances of conscience—the dictates of reason and of the will in favour of

[1] Rom. i. 32.

virtue, which for a while are in the ascendant, and control the enchantment, that, like a circean cup, had been well nigh quaffed to destruction;—all bear witness to the war within. The sense of shame and self-degradation at the wrong done to ourselves or others, as well as of offence committed against reason—the sharp stings of remorse and wretchedness which succeed the perpetrations of sin—and, on the contrary, the complacency felt in yielding to the dictates of duty, and the profound satisfaction attendant on the act itself, as if the man had achieved a victory,—these phenomena of our nature are decisive evidences that the moral law in the hands of a Mediator, is not to man barely the knowledge of good and evil, but *power* to make his election between them, and to adjust his actions to its requirements.

In considering a subject of so wide a bearing, it is of the first importance to hold that every dispensation of the moral law given to the world, implies, through Redemption, a corresponding dispensation of grace. Truth and grace, light and life, are inseparable elements in this remedial constitution as it has been settled from the beginning. These also quadrate with each other in measure, as well as in origin and design. For example, the light of Nature, so far as it teaches moral truths independently of Revelation, is a vastly lower status, both as to knowledge and moral power, than that which belongs to the most rudimental dispensation of revealed truth. The law as given by Moses, and illustrated by the prophets, was a great advance on anything that had gone before: it expanded the field of theologic and practical truth, and contained

a richer gift of enabling grace to its people than the uncovenanted could in any case enjoy.

But in both respects, it fell immeasurably short of the Gospel, since the Law was not based on the doctrine of *regeneration*, neither required this as the status of its people in order to their covenant standing with God; whereas the Gospel declares, that 'unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'[1] The reason why such an advance of our moral nature is required in one case, and not in the other, lies in the superlative excellence as a dispensation of law of the one over the other, rendering this change indispensable. 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.'[2] The evangelic edition of law is so perfect, that nothing short of a miracle wrought on our nature can comport with it, or make it anything but a dead letter,—or rather, a 'ministration of death' to men. The subject is not to be enlarged on here; and is only touched to show that a graduated scale of obligation and help belongs to the administration of the moral law as it comes from Christ to man in virtue of his redemption, and with a view to his salvation.

Penalty postponed under mediatorial administration.

(4.) It remains only to notice in connection with man's personal relation to the moral law, that a most benignant feature of it is the *postponement of its penalties*. A state of guilt is undoubtedly the general state of man as settled by the Scriptures, particularly by the New Testament; and it is as clearly the general burden of human experience. This fact has rendered the doctrine of *expiation*, in

[1] John iii. 3. [2] Matt. v. 17.

some form or other, the cardinal point in the religion of the world, which philosophy and moral teaching have ever been powerless to deal with. Of its tremendous power and significance nothing need here be said: it is to the fact as a phenomenon in man's moral history, and its relation to the divine rule, that attention is directed. That the sense of guilt, and its inseparable concomitant, condemnation, are God's attestation to man, through man himself, of his true relation to His law, it is impossible to doubt. By the awards of justice in the depths of the soul, man is forbidden to trust in the fallacies he is so prone to fabricate,—that his delinquencies are innocuous to himself, here or hereafter,—which would imply the non-existence, or non-enforcement of a divine rule. Conscience is an insurmountable barrier to the triumphs of passion and perverted reason in man: it is a strong and persistent protest against the *assumption of practical evil, that it is or can be non-punitive.*

Still, this doctrine of the soul itself, and of universal confession, is not in accordance with plain matter-of-fact. The non-punishment of sin generally, and as it respects individuals particularly, is the equally declared truth of experience and confession. True, there are certain ordinances of God's providence which must be construed as penal; but these rather affect *the race as such* than its individuals specifically—its status broadly taken in contrast with its pristine privileges, rather than the condition of men in the aspects of a separate accountability. The two great antitheses of guilt and righteousness, evangelically taken, equally consist, in their several living examples, with the same

general ordinances of Providence. Justice sets no mark upon sinners, as upon Cain, who was made 'a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth.' Nothing can be gathered of Heaven's decrees respecting men from the current course of events. If there be a victim on his way to the fire which salts the sacrifice with indestructibleness, he may be gaily garlanded. Creation lends him, it may be, all the pomp of circumstance, which it would be cynical to interpret as an augury of a dire fate forthcoming. Job says, there is prosperity in the tabernacles of the wicked: they send forth their little ones to the dance, and they go down to the grave with the sounds of the tabret, and the noise of the viols.[1]

Space given for repentance.

Now, the question arises, what interpretation are we to put on the seeming impunity of guilt on the one hand, and its registered reality on the other? Can they be made to coincide, or not? Are they to stand apart in the hereafter of man, just as if totally unrelated; or are they to meet in a catastrophe, somewhere, or somehow, though we have no overt evidence to this effect? On the affirmative side of this question being taken, one of two suppositions is tenable: either that the arrears of judgment are finally to be quitted, after having been long suffered to accumulate, in one swoop of destruction; or, that they are simply withheld for a season, to afford scope for the accomplishment of beneficent objects. If the former, then it would seem that even justice is terribly severe, assuming a character of vengeance which we must shrink from ascribing to the Deity. It hardly consists with His infinite benevolence to forbear the punish-

[1] Job xxi. 11.

ment due to sin, merely that, after seeming to be indulgent to the sinner, justice might take occasion to mete out to him a doom a hundred-fold more heavy. If this be impossible, then it is clear that not justice, but a forbearing benevolence, is really the ruling power in the interim between the first and the last stages of man's history. According to this, justice itself becomes subservient to the purposes of benevolence, by giving warning to the sinner, out of the depths of his own bosom, to flee from impending perdition by supplicating mercy.

That this is the explanation of this double phenomena of conscious guilt and actual impunity, is plain from the uniform testimony of Scripture, and from its consonancy with the revealed character of God. He has sworn by himself that he has 'no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live.'[1] The 'long-suffering' of the Lord is said to be 'salvation;' and he is said not to be 'willing that men should perish, but that all should come to repentance:'[2] and further, that sin is 'past through the forbearance of God'—that he might be 'just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.'[3]

The Law made a means of salvation.

Hence it appears, that not only is the moral law in the hands of Christ greatly softened in its judicial aspects toward men, but that it is closely associated by him with his salvation. Not only does it give scope for repentance and pardon, but it becomes *the great means of realizing them.* The law is placed in a new relation to men, and supplies the discipline necessary to the soul's deliverance. It is 'our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we

[1] Ezek. xxxiii. 11. [2] 2 Peter iii. 9. [3] Rom. iii. 26.

might be justified by faith.'[1] Its office is to stimulate the conscience, and to rouse the fears of the guilty: to create self-loathing in the sight and sense of our soul-bondage, and to raise within us the cry for deliverance, 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God.' It is probably in this double reference to the Spirit as the administrator of law and grace to the soul that he is called by Christ 'the Spirit of truth;' and by the Apostle Paul, 'the Spirit of bondage,' and 'the Spirit of adoption.' His office is to apply the Law and the Gospel: to verify and illustrate the decisions of the conscience, and the language of the heart; and so to prepare men for the grand exodus of the soul from the power of darkness into 'the kingdom of God's dear Son.'[2]

Two points of importance offer themselves to our attention here.

1*st*, That this administration of the moral law *is based upon mediatorial provisions, and intended to give them effect:* and

2*dly*, That this administration constitutes the method of the divine government, and the rule of life to man *in the absence of any direct revelation and overtures of remedial grace.*

Mediatorial grace a moral force for man's recovery.

As to the first, the characters of the administration now sketched, prove that it is purely mediational, and that it admits of no satisfactory solution on any other theory. Even human jurisprudence does not pass over single offences in order that it may visit the criminal with summary punishment in the end, since this were to make punishment the object of government, instead of a means; and to expose its folly and weakness by doing more to

[1] Gal. iii. 24. [2] Col. i. 13.

foster crime, whilst seeming to connive at it, than to repress it by prompt penalties. The sin of men self-convicted, yet slumbering throughout life, as if deprived of its sting, and so far leagued with the soul as to be one with itself, could not thus bewray itself under the rule of infinite rectitude, were not some great ultimate purpose of *benevolence* involved in it; nor could the disposition of men to sympathize with this purpose be expected to show itself so remarkably as it does, merely because they are guilty; but rather, because there is implanted in them something like a divine instinct which awakens it. Guilt, for anything we see to the contrary, might uniformly breathe despair, and the stings of remorse might have been so deep and envenomed as to paralyze the soul with terror; whereas, in point of fact, the case is far otherwise. Men are in greater danger of presumption than of despair, and of hiding from themselves their liability to the retributions of justice, through their blind confidence in the divine mercy.

Now, it would seem that this fact is best accounted for, if viewed as the true but perverted reflex of the mediational economy; which, as it is based upon the broadest doctrine of indulgence, so does it chiefly trust to its efficacy as a *moral force* for reconquering the apostate heart of man. Love, not terror, must be the prevailing element in human recovery, since our nature was made to be ruled and replenished by it: hence, the deepest human instincts and sympathies are appealed to by this power, and, though not unmingled with dread when the conscience is awakened by the sense of sin, these turn the soul, as it were, naturally to the

paternal aspect of Deity, like an offending child glancing upward to the eyes of a father in anger, as to the seat and image of tenderness familiar to *his intuition*, though to others veiled in a cloud of indignation, or a tempest of reproach.

Mediation not confined to the gospel economy.

The second point is an easy deduction from the first. For if man's whole moral estate be environed by Mediation, it follows that its benign effects cannot be wholly dependent on any particular mode or degree of its application; that is, the benefits of Mediation cannot be confined to the *gospel economy*, much less to the comparatively few whom it ultimately saves. For if the Gospel which records the facts, propounds also the truths and the objects of Mediation as entirely circumscribed by its own operations, then it follows that the whole race must have lived and died in a lost condition ere it was published; and that this has been the dreadful fact from that day to this, with respect to all and every one lying beyond the pale of the Church: conclusions these as abhorrent to Scripture as they are to our whole rational and moral sense. The true view of the Gospel is not that it contains the sum of all the mercy which God dispenses to the world; but that it reveals *both the ground and the fulness* of that mercy. It not only presupposes, and builds upon, a train of facts running upward to the origin of the race, and terminating in itself, but also upon an administration universally saving in its bearings during the initial and undeveloped stages of its design; and one, which if it be not *increased*, is certainly not *superseded*, by the presence of the Gospel among mankind. *The earlier and broader aspect of the mediatorial economy remains unchanged*, and is

made the 'beginning of the Gospel,' and the groundwork of appeal wherever this comes. *Underlying* the special and privileged state of man into which the Gospel ushers him, it forms the preliminary to its office, and the outskirts of its kingdom. The roots of the Gospel are struck into the federal root of the race itself, and ramified throughout the vast mass as it is spread over all time, and over all the earth; while its stem, branches, and fruit, culminate together in the published reign of the Mediator—in the truths and behests of the New Testament.

Religion obedience to truth.

Hence, Religion, though the same in *principle*, is very various in formal development. Generally speaking, it may be defined as obedience to truth of a moral kind, in whatever manner or degree it may come to us. This principle centres in our moral constitution, and its relations to the Mediator: it is ineradicable by the vanities of tradition, the failure of an external source of knowledge, or the love of error, to which man is so fatally prone; so that, while there is rarely a condition of man so debased as altogether to preclude its presence, there is hardly a condition of advance at which it may stop, short of the godliness and virtue of revealed religion.

The sense of obligation to resist evil and to practise virtue, is an implantation of grace in the human nature generally; and while its conscious and wilful violations lay men under condemnation, compliance with it, however imperfect, constitutes that righteousness which 'in every nation' insures acceptance with God through the Mediator. No man is held responsible for light which never shone upon him, or for a talent never given him; but for using what he has, and for obtaining whatever he

may have on compliance with the rule of duty. No man could be justified in remaining a heathen when offered the privileges of the Jew; much less might any man plead his descent from Abraham, or his legal righteousness, in discharge of the obligation to become a Christian when the Gospel was preached to him. That same virtue which in one case might be accepted, might in another be rejected, not only as insufficient, but as *opposed* to 'the righteousness of God'—and by this antagonism to the highest rule of duty, perverted into a damning sin.

Relations between the inner and outer light.

If man, as a moral agent embraced by a mediational system, hold, as inspiration affirms, the franchise of being 'a law to himself;' the same authority, and even reason itself, requires, that he employ his trust faithfully. Subjective truths must be tested, and to a certain extent *modified*, whenever it can be done, by a comparison with objective ones. In no sense can the inward light, as it has been called, be held as sufficient, to the exclusion of the outer: such perversion would change it into darkness more dense and blinding than ignorance of the grossest kind. The very origin of this light, which in certain untoward positions of individuals and masses it has pleased Infinite Wisdom to permit to be isolated, shows that its purpose and efficacy are annulled whenever it is withholden from the fullest converse with the revealed truths which compose its solar centre—the only source of what may truly be regarded as vision to men. Whatever there is in man of moral and religious intuition—often rather enfeebled than improved by intercourse with the world—is nothing better than the dimmest

twilight, or the flickering lamp held in the bosom of midnight; which, it were preposterous to imagine, could ever brighten itself into the cheerful day. It implies and foretokens the light of the Gospel, but can never supersede it; any more than the ordinance that commands it to be preached 'to every creature' can give place to one which should limit it, like the law, to a nation only, or withhold it altogether from the world.

The effects of knowledge or ignorance on our moral nature.

Agreeably with this view, it will be seen, that as knowledge does not *of itself* save, so neither does ignorance *of itself* destroy. Error, though to a certain extent the product of our speculative faculty, is yet to an equal extent the product of other causes, —its operation is determined by the condition of our moral nature. Knowledge is, indeed, power; but it is still left undetermined by this axiom, to what purposes this power shall be applied, or, indeed, whether it shall be applied at all. As a correlative axiom, ignorance is powerlessness; but it does not follow, that if it cannot achieve the same things as knowledge, it altogether incapacitates for moral action, any more than infancy, though incapable of the acts of manhood, is devoid of every function of life; or than the savage, though incapable of the acts of the civilised man, is precluded from the use of his limbs. Knowledge as power is also duty; while it gives facilities, it enlarges obligation. As a form of privilege, religiously considered, it must have its corresponding accountability, which, if it graduate to the highest point of the scale determining the maximum of duty, also descends to its minimum, where ignorance is all but absolute and invincible.

The point of interest, when estimating the relative positions of knowledge and ignorance to each other, is not so much what is possible or impossible, *as abstract questions*, but what experience instructs us to regard as the certain, or, at least, probable result of each. Knowledge, for instance, in the christian sense, does produce kindred, though by no means commensurate effects; and, on the other hand, ignorance, in the same sense, does produce results of its own. Hence we infer, that though it is true that knowledge of itself does not save, nor ignorance of itself destroy; but that in order to these alternatives, the whole moral nature of man must concur; yet there is in knowledge and ignorance respectively a bearing on our moral nature tending to, though not necessitating them. Under the regimes of knowledge and ignorance respectively, certain results *will*, though we may not say that they *must*, happen.

Condition of the Heathen under mediatorial rule.

Should this discussion seem desultory, it is far from unimportant, when its bearings are seen on certain hyper-evangelic views which widely obtain, and which appear to ignore the existence of any remedial provision whatever on behalf of the vast peoples of the world outlying the Christian Church. It is assumed as a matter beyond controversy, that the uncovenanted majority of the race, have, as to mediational grace, no 'part nor lot in the matter;' and that, walking as they do, 'in darkness and the shadow of death,' they are as absolutely doomed as they exist. Such is the basis frequently laid for missionary operations. Undoubtedly, the necessity for evangelical succour must be felt to be overwhelmingly dreadful that rests on such an assump-

tion as this; but, at the same time, it is hardly considered that, if true, such a necessity would as much tend to paralyze as to incite benevolence.

Despondency may well seize on a believer in such a doctrine, when he reflects by how slow and halting a process this infinitude of evil can, by any christian instrumentality, be arrested. So far from being incited to grapple with and to hurl it from the face of the earth, he would rather turn away, as from a glimpse of Pandemonium, ever yawning to engulph the millions of our hapless race. If it may be assumed that the overwhelming majority of mankind fated to live and die without the pale of the Church, also lie as completely beyond the circle of mediation and the realm of grace, who dares to approach such a dread territory of divine proscription as this?—or to assure himself, in the face of such an anathematized mass of men—his own flesh and blood—that the same tender mercies, the same teeming 'loving-kindness,' broods over this, as pervades and vitalizes that favoured province of earth in which his own lot is cast? How stricken and desolate, infinitely worse than by a flood, or the fiery tempest that overwhelmed the cities of the plain, were these vast and populous portions of our globe—as utterly estranged from mercy as from virtue—bereft of hope, and reprobate of Heaven! Who can bear the thought that such *is* the condition of untold millions of our fellows, not on account of their *guilt*, but on account of their *lot!*—not because their sin has brought them into it, but because there was no possibility that their condition could be otherwise!

Nor is this the dogma of a creed: it is too much

the practical belief of men of varying opinion. Between the most rigid and terrible tenets of predestination, and the assumptions of its opponents, there is scarcely an appreciable difference of view here. According to both, no mercy finds its way to men lying far away from the province of ordinances; and no salvation for men, as the Papists say, beyond the Church. It is forgotten in these unqualified statements, that the divine benevolence is not commended by them, nor even the *righteousness of God* made manifest, who, nevertheless, makes His appeal to man's own sense of equity in the challenge, 'Are not my ways equal?'[1] As little, too, is it considered, that the glory of the atonement is thus obscured, and the loving sceptre of the Saviour converted into 'a rod of iron.'

Except in the *prospective* relations of these masses to evangelical operations, it is difficult, on these principles, to divine why they exist; and why such infinity of interest attaches to a solitary human being, according to the doctrine of Jesus: 'There is joy in heaven over *one* sinner that repenteth.'[2] Bad as the actual condition of the unevangelized world unquestionably is, both reason and piety forbid that it should be exaggerated in order to uphold the importance of the gospel mission. It is more wise, and more Christian, assuredly, to believe that the *race-grace* of mediation does something for men, than to believe that it does nothing; or rather, serves only to make them amenable to justice, which, in point of fact, is hardly separable from the mere exercise of the power to destroy them.

[1] Ezek. xviii. 29. [2] Luke xv. 10.

It is no answer to this protest against extreme views, to allege the inefficacy of this supposed catholic mediational provision for the production of piety and virtue: the same objection may be taken to the efficacy of the Gospel itself, since the question may still be anxiously raised wherever it is prevalent—'Lord, are there few that be saved?' This fact, however, is no argument against sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and as little concludes against its efficacy. It is just as strongly in favour of the necessity of this measure, as it is in proof of the intensity of human depravity, which, if able to withstand 'the power of God unto salvation,' how much more may it prevail against the feeble whispers of truth and conscience in bosoms where the Gospel is absent?

Christ the Judge.

St Paul, where he declares that 'God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel,'[1] delivers a doctrine very apposite to our present train of observation. He affirms three points of importance to the destinies of men: that they are to be judged by Jesus Christ; that they are to be judged according to the Gospel; and that they are to be judged with respect to their 'secrets.'

The rule of judgment.

These are all *mediational* propositions. The first defines the *Person* who will administer justice to all men in the last day: the second declares the *rule* by which judgment will be conducted: the third declares the *nature and extent* of its application. A few lines may be expended on the last particular.

The nature and extent of its application.

'*The secrets of men*' is a phrase very suggestive and comprehensive: it may denote, either the heart-searching nature of the final inquisition, or its rela-

[1] Rom. ii.

tion to the infinitely diverse phases of man's moral condition, which renders it impossible for any being less than God to apply a perfect rule to each and all with infallible precision, and which makes the doom of individuals and masses of men to us a fathomless mystery. It is among the 'secret things which belong unto the Lord.'

It is here intimated, that we are to forbear pressing a general truth too far, so as to draw from it conclusions prejudicial to man's prospects, and to the honour of God's grace. We are warned against our propensity to judge one another where the necessary data are absent: that it belongs to the Lord to bring 'the hidden things to light, and to make manifest the counsels of the heart'—these 'secrets' of men—these soul-labyrinths—the repentance or obduration—the palliations of crime, or the facts of pardon or condemnation—as things which *we* are forbidden to pry into. It is enough for us that they are all known to Him to whom they belong, and that they will all be divulged finally by the Mediator as 'Lord of all:' decided, too, in accordance with the GOSPEL, which casts its light on the *uncovenanted* portions of the world as well as on Christendom—which asserts an economy of gracious, graduating equity as universally prevalent—which, while it bestows distinguishing privileges on the *few*, proscribes not the *many*, or allows 'the thing formed to say unto Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?'[1]

Responsibility and privilege, mutually answerable.

But while we hold it incongruous to the reign of a free and universal grace through the Mediator to disassociate it from an administration of law, we

[1] Isa. xlv. 10.

must also hold it as equally true, that the dispensation of law cannot neutralize the dispensation of grace by advancing a rule beyond the capacity of the agent, morally considered, to keep; thus subjecting him, by *necessary default*, to inevitable condemnation. As in the instances of children and idiots such a principle must be allowed, since *law* is to them altogether inapplicable; may we not also allow, that from such conditions of non-responsibility there arises a scale of responsibility of infinite degrees in its application to men placed in infinite varieties of external condition, idiosyncrasies of nature, measures of capacity, or even of prevenient grace? To each one of this countless host the divine rule is perfectly adapted, and is as complete in its isolated form of individuality as it is in its aspects toward the whole world. For if the light of Omniscience pervade as strongly the atoms which make up the measure of a mountain as it does the mountain itself, or the separate blades of grass as it does the herbage of a field, is it a miracle if the same attribute scrutinize with equal clearness the depths of an individual mind? Or, if (to employ our Lord's language) it number the very hairs of our heads, can it be supposed to ignore the states of our souls? or, not to take the inventory of our deeds?—in other words, to carry into effect the principles on which God has planned human life under the Mediator, and to show their product in the final destiny of each, by awards in all respects answerable to his own holiness, wisdom, and love?

(5.) The closing notice of the moral administration of the Mediator, includes the social and public view

Mediatorial rule over nations the same as over individuals.

of its application to our race. The principles of this rule over bodies of men are the same as those in action on individuals; they are only modified in their application by conditions inseparable from the *collective* form of human nature. They rather bear upon the broader aspects of society, morally considered, than upon individual character, and through the organisms peculiar to national life. Nations take their moral complexions from the nature of man, just as individuals do; and they are better or worse, as they respect or spurn the moral restraints which God has deposited in our nature as antagonistic to its corruptions. At best, their moral features are of a very mixed kind, and are so complicated by the relations and workings of society, that nothing short of Omniscience can suffice to analyze them thoroughly, and to weigh them judicially. No doubt, their prevailing condition ever has been, and is still, one of great guiltiness before Heaven. To this conclusion we are driven, both by the testimony of history, and the denunciations of the Bible. Not one of all the nations brought before us in Scripture is spoken of commendingly: on the contrary, they are described as flagrantly wicked, and obnoxious to vengeance.

Perhaps this great truth of fact and testimony is the most impressive exhibition of mediational rule in the history of man. From the earliest times downward, we see abused goodness seemingly passive to the baseness of man, and, as it were, reluctantly giving place to a late awakening wrath, which as often relapses into quiescence, and for a long period suffers 'mercy to rejoice against judgment.' Even penalties are inflicted less to injure

than to warn, and show less of the destructive than of salutary chastening. Sentence is again and again followed by reprieve; and the tempest big with ruin, as it nears its victims, is suddenly dispersed. This is so clearly the method of God's procedure toward communities, and the world at large, that to amplify proofs were superfluous. 'Long-suffering,' indeed, has its limits, and intercession its last plea; but these, it would seem, are answerable to any stage and degree of human crime short of *the fulness* of iniquity, the gauge of which is astonishingly ample, as its award is finally overwhelming.

Nations judged by the standard they profess.

Here, as in the case of individuals, a gracious equity forms the divine balance in which nations are weighed. The standard of moral law is regarded which *they profess to adopt*, and a comparison made between this and a course of national life. Is worship offered to God or to idols? Is he known, but disregarded, and the truth so far changed 'into a lie,' and held 'in unrighteousness?' Are laws the dictates of eternal justice, or are they the behests of tyranny? Is the magistracy a terror to evil-doers, or an incubus on the people, and an enemy to the righteous? Are perjury and profanity prescriptional offences? Is poverty despised and trodden down by the imperiousness of wealth and title? Is humanity metamorphosed into a compound of beast and devil? Are covenants wantonly broken, and war delighted in as glory; and neighbour peoples spoiled and enslaved, wasted and destroyed, through lust of conquest and dominion?

All sins of national magnitude invoke justice

with a cry which rends the heavens, and brings down thence the response of 'the Watchers,' as on Belshazzar in his orgies, 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting.' Nations, unlike individuals, have their existence and offices on earth only; consequently, their doom is temporal. If in Scripture, as in poetry, they are personified, it is not merely to intensify the representation by giving force to a general idea, otherwise too feeble to affect us. A nation, as an organized body, has an unity similar to that of a person before its Maker, and one of gigantic powers for good and evil, which he will judge accordingly. All the forms of national address found in the prophets have their root in this truth.

Nations live only as they subserve the kingdom of Christ.

But there is yet another principle of comprehensive sway over nations, besides those included in a rule of gracious equity: this is *wisdom*, which regards them not chiefly as components of the world, much less in their individual aspects, but solely as they comport with mediatorial designs. Nations are made and held together on *one principle only*—their subserviency to the one empire of 'the last days.' This is their measure and stature —'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

Such is the doctrine of prophecy, particularly of Daniel's interpretation of the colossal image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream; and such is the profound, though as yet hidden, philosophy of history itself. All polities, whether antecedent or following, are tributary to the supremacy of One, and but initiatory to its grandeur, just as initiatory epochs were to the material grandeur of the globe as a habita-

tion for man. All are represented in that sublime consummation of the future, which shall gather to itself not the enslaved myriads of earth, as once they gathered to inaugurate 'an image of gold' on the plains of Dura, but to celebrate the reign of Heaven upon the earth—the jubilee of freedom and holiness—'the acceptable year of the Lord.'

CHAPTER XIX.

THE JUDICIAL PREROGATIVES OF CHRIST.

The last general prerogative of the Mediator is the Judicial, or the awards proper to the administration of the moral system which consists by Him, as a rule of justice and grace.

Judgment and rule equivalent.

To rule is to administer law so that it is felt throughout the domain of subject intelligents as interpretive of the mind of the Lawgiver,—individually rendered and exactly answerable to character and desert. Hence to rule men, is in Scripture to judge them. This is the most usual phase of sovereignty in the Old Testament, where God is set forth as the Judge of his people, and his successive vicars are called judges. He is also in the New Testament termed the 'Judge of all;' that is, the Supreme Governor of the church and the world. The messianic scriptures, particularly the Psalms, uniformly represent the Christ as the Judge of men, and his administration as one of equal benevolence and holiness: 'Mercy and truth go before his face:' 'justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne:' 'a fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.'[1] 'The hills leap, and the world trembles before him. 'He saves the poor and needy, and breaks in pieces the oppressor:'

Judgment a messianic prerogative.

[1] Psalm xcvii. 2, 3.

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'their blood is precious in his sight;' but his enemies are made to 'lick the dust.'[1]. He is said 'to reprove with equity for the meek of the earth;' but 'with the breath of his mouth' to 'slay the wicked.'[2]

These descriptions of psalmody and prophecy appear even in the latest record of the Old Testament, where the Spirit of prophecy, for a while, takes leave of the world. Here, the judicial is also pre-eminent: 'Who may abide the day of his coming, or stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.'[3] He is 'the Sun of Righteousness, bearing healing in his wings to them who fear his name;' but the day that reveals him 'shall burn as an oven.'[4]

Christ's judicial power when on earth.

With these testimonies of prophecy those of the Messiah's history entirely accord. From the outset of our Lord's ministry the judicial side of his character begins to show itself. Not only were his teachings judgments, and his exorcisms acts of vengeance on the enemy; he held his assize in souls whenever they came within the sound of his voice, or the influence of his name. Though himself 'the throne of grace,' living and moving in the human form, yet the most awful prerogatives dwelt within him, and the outgoings of retribution were hardly less striking in certain directions than were the footsteps of love and healing in others. When Jesus uttered a threat or a woe, who did not feel that these were ordinances of the judgment-seat?—anathemas which, as no human will or passion dictated them, so no human art or power could arrest their withering energy. His words were the wings

[1] Psalm lxxii. 4. [2] Isa. xi. 4. [3] Mal. iii. 2. [4] Mal. iv. 1.

of justice, its forked lightnings, its consuming fires: they were more than predictions; they were judicial behests which nothing but submission and suit to Himself could suspend or avert.

Rarely did our Lord utter a greater truth than when he said, in the hearing of the Pharisees, 'For judgment am I come into the world.'[1] Not only were men's actions to be ruled by a higher standard than before, but their minds were to be pervaded with higher moral elements, and their doom to be awarded by a Power resident and unfolded in their own nature. The whole work of human restoration, and its results, were to be issues of *judgment;* or of the moral nature and moral action of God in his creatures. Judgment in Christ became incarnate, in order to display by his person and government its most complex and comprehensive behests. Even the final judgment which our Lord is to administer, and which now stands before us as the one great event of the future, cannot be regarded as appropriating to itself all the characters of judicial grandeur, since it is to be viewed rather as the upshot of a protracted career of justice, combining all the antecedents as well as all the epochs of mediation—the catastrophe for which the life and fortunes of our race, and the eye and hand of God, have ever been preparing. The final judgment will announce no *new principles;* nor will it stand out from the entire previous course of divine administration as something peculiar to that day; but rather, as the *demonstration* of results long in process. Grace will not *then* shine forth from the abyss of the Infinite as a primeval ray into darkness; or justice then

The last day the issue of all preceding judgments.

[1] John ix. 39.

first utter its penalties in the ear of convicted guilt. Justice will then appear as old and authoritative as law—the last and loudest voice of truth—as the great harvest-gatherer of grace, and the eternal consummator of the kingdom of God. Judgment is, in truth, the constant march of the divine rectitude with the mind of the intelligent universe,—silent, it may be, but all-pervading, till its last grand halt marshals that universe for doom, and impresses its own image on every individual of the vast aggregate.

The Incarnation a stage in the progress of judgment.

Hence, our Lord's coming into the world marked a stage in the progress of judgment—the creation of a tribunal of loftier character than any that had preceded it. His office and character threw upon the world a new and stronger light than had visited it from its foundation. An age of truth and goodness was then ushered in which much more than reflected the past, while it poured broad daylight on the world's future. The grand model of truth and holiness was seen in Christ himself. Of the glories of law and grace in their utmost combination, he was the source, and the mirror. Enthroned in him, they had descended from heaven to earth; nor were the scenes of his humiliation and suffering so much the obscuration of these divine prerogatives, as proofs of their power, and the means for promoting them to their loftiest offices present and to come.

The ministry of Jesus abounds with notices of this kind. Among men, and over them, he exercised the judgment of *deliverance*, and the judgment of *penalty:* these divided between them the multitudes which surrounded him, and the nation to

which he was sent. The connection of the prophecies of Isaiah, as opened by John, with the times and the ministry of Jesus, is in proof of the *judicial* nature of its bearings and effects; for while the words, 'These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him,'[1] show that the glory of Christ appeared to the prophet, it is equally clear from the same testimony, that the *judicial* majesty which commissioned the prophet to blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the rebellious men of his generation *reasserted itself in the ministry of Jesus.* This is incontestable; and the inference to be drawn from the statement is, that in his humiliation as man, and in his ministry as the prophet of God, his divine majesty showed itself, wielding even in this form the highest prerogatives of the 'throne high and lifted up.' The judgment of deliverance, and the judgment of penalty illustrated by the vision of the prophet as the glory of Christ, is seen in exercise during the whole ministry of Jesus. He retains or remits sin: He hardens the heart, or dissolves it in penitence and gratitude; he delivers to Satan, or rids of his thraldom; and thus gives us his own comment on his memorable words, 'For judgment I am come into this world.'

Man as a sinner, and man as under the dominion of Satan.

Looking broadly on the characters of our Lord's mission, it may be said to be twofold, in correspondence with the twofold aspects of our race. This twofold relation regards men either as they stand toward God as subjects of his government, that is, merely as sinners; or as they stand toward him as subjects of 'the wicked one.' These two

[1] John xii. 41.

conditions of men, though inseparable, are plainly distinct, and for purposes of investigation may be taken apart. The one implies a condition of rebellion or anomaly, both as it respects the race and individuals; the other implies more than this: it is evil in its worst possible form, since it implies not merely a sinful nature and condition, but, besides this, a rule wielded over man by the Power that originally seduced him, and therefore of terrible capacity to aggravate the mischief by a systematic operation on his faculties, thus turning them more absolutely against the rule of God.

The effects of redemption on Satan's power.

This, then, being the scripture view of man's case, the plan of human restoration must be twofold, namely, a provision for him as a sinner, and his rescue from Satan: both these are comprised in the doctrine of redemption. True, this rescue is included in the provision for man as a sinner, because his relations with God are necessarily both fundamental and ultimate in the work of his recovery; but attention to the statements of Scripture and the facts of the case show that subordinately, and as it respects the cast of its administration, man's redemption is very specially adapted to his rescue from the power of Satan, and that to this the provisions of grace stand as means to an end. The root of evil must be dealt with in order to destroy its fruit. In other words, the relations of Satan to human nature must be altered, and his power over it abated; otherwise its deliverance might be impossible, except by such an exercise of prerogative as would altogether destroy the status of human nature with a moral rule. Probably satanic influence over our nature as fallen,

may be so absolute that but for this, the provisions of grace, as necessarily conditionalized by moral considerations, might be altogether inapplicable.

Man's resistance to light and grace is all but insuperable, even as the case now stands in the economy of salvation—a fact which may well startle the meditative spirit, and give birth to the notion that *infrustrable* operation by the Holy Spirit is the necessary basis of all individual redemption. Yet on this supposition, it is plain that no *restrictions* needed to be imposed on the Spirit of evil, since the operation of the human will being wholly superseded, the divine volition cannot fail to carry its own ends in spite of his utmost resistance. On the theory of infrustrable divine operation, not only is the moral nature of man violated, but the agency of Satan totally *precluded.*

Power of moral arbitration in man.

The provisions of redemption, in order to be available, and yet in harmony with the constitution of man and the appliances of an evil Power, demand that some degree of *moral arbitration be reserved to man, though fallen,* and that the agency of Satan be *proportionably abated.* The whole doctrine of temptation, the appellations of Satan, and the position he holds toward human nature, as set forth in Scripture, imply all this. For, though he is called 'the prince,' and even 'the god of this world' (titles indicative of a terrible ascendancy over the race),—still these are but descriptions of a *fact,* not of a *necessity*—the indices of a policy and a working on the part of the Evil One awfully triumphant, but not of his *relations* to human nature rendering no *alternative possible.* Were the latter supposition true, we must infer, that since

these titles are almost as applicable to him now as when they were given, it could in no sense have been true, as stated by our Lord, that Satan in his day fell 'as lightning from heaven;'[1] or that 'the prince of this world' was *then* cast out.'[2]

As sin in its practical ascendancy over man does not represent the force of his *nature alone*, but also of his *personal will*, which might be other than it is; so the actual ascendancy of Satan over man does not represent the amount of his power *abstractedly taken*, but its action upon human nature under its *own appropriate conditions*. It is a reduced and limited power, though still fearfully great. This basis of procedure assumes the redemptional efficacy of Christ's mediation, and cannot in the smallest degree traverse either the *status given to our nature by this provision, or the conditions necessary to its ultimate design.*

Christ's exorcisms preliminary and typical.

That our Lord himself viewed his work on earth as effectuating a great and decisive change in the *relations* of men to the author of evil, is evident from various passages in the gospels, as well as from the fact that he cast out devils by his own ministry, and that of his disciples. This prerogative was both a preliminary to, and a type of, his more glorious work about to commence—his assault on the *moral* empire of 'the prince of this world.' The exorcisms were *preliminary judgments* to the grand overthrow then just looming. They alighted rather on the *satellites* of Satan than on *Satan himself;* and bore rather on the calamitous possession of human beings by his hosts, inflicting various *physical* evils on humanity, than on the *moral*

[1] Luke. [2] John.

agency of Satan within the *soul*. As proofs of a supreme power over devils in him that cast them out, they were *prognostics* of their leader's fall, which, for the present, left his power untouched in the citadel of its strength, or at least in *that measure* within which the *antecedent agencies* of redemption had circumscribed it. The *crushing* blow long impending was now to be struck; 'the hour was come'—the world-crisis in the judgment of *deposition* to alight upon Satan himself preparatory to his final ejection and punishment.

By the Atonement not only is sin expiated, but Satan himself overthrown—deposed, though not immediately 'cast out.' This is *preliminary* to the full application of the provisions of grace, by which man is completely rescued from his grasp. Guilt and corruption being destroyed by the power of the Cross, the very foundations of Satan's empire are dissolved, and a new dominion installed in its place. The man, now under other custody, and exulting in his new-born powers, sides with his Deliverer, and gains victories under his banner which make the judgment of deposition tell heavily on the foe.

The Cross a second stage in the defeat of the Evil One;

The 'judgment' upon the enemy sealed by the conflict of the Cross, follows hard upon defeat: he is routed, and the spoils divided. 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly.'[1] This is a *second* stage in the 'judgment' on the Evil One.

the Ascension a third;

The ascension and enthronement mark a *third* step in the same direction, since the Messiah is invested with prerogatives which foredoom the enemy, and with an empire which ensures his annihilation.

[1] Col. ii. 15.

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the mission of the Spirit a fourth.

A *fourth* step in the process of this 'judgment' is the mission of the Spirit to the world, and to the soul of man especially. His *divinity* in its highest resources is brought into immediate correspondence with the moral springs of our nature, and there intersecting the very pathways of Satan, seeks to expel him by the avenues through which he had entered, and by the powers which he had usurped. Hence, those most pregnant words of Jesus; 'Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.' The Spirit's office is based on the 'judgment' *already passed* upon Satan; and he is *pledged* to carry it out in human deliverance. The Spirit's mission is, therefore, pre-eminently one of *judgment*, and his entire career from Pentecost to the consummation, one of doom on the enemy. He uniformly acts as the Spirit of *judgment*, whenever he destroys sin and delivers souls. Indignation is joined with mercy in all these acts; and the fire of his jealousy is the arrow of his deliverance. There is something awful as well as gracious in this zeal of the Lord of Hosts. His pity on man is the measure of 'his revenges on the enemy,'—as it were, his 'horses and chariots of salvation,' the most consuming rush of his strength.

These doctrines, perhaps, throw light upon the times and history of the Gospel as compared with our own, or modern times. For, since it appears from scripture testimony, that the power of Satan suffered a great reduction on and after the Saviour's advent, the absence of examples of demoniacal possession as matters of general belief, and as vouched for by the gospels, seems explained. Satan works under restraint, though not yet bound and cast into

the pit; while in countries and ages illuminated by the christian church, the *elements* to a great extent *are wanting* indispensable to the more signal displays of his power. But this view of the matter is merely hypothetic, and does not preclude or affirm the existence of cases of evil possession (except in the moral sense) in post-advent days. These are questions of fact which we have no evidence to determine. If they were phenomena antecedent to the advent only, then their *cessation* marked the transition of the empire of the world from Satan's sway into the hands of the Redeemer.

Social amelioration a proof of Satan's deposition.

But whatever conclusions may be adopted on these data, it is no mere matter of opinion that the judgment of *deposition* passed upon the Evil One is yet in progress, and that it is carried on by an incessant struggle between the religion or church of Christ, and the darkness and corruption of the world. Every degree of advancement in the moral condition of nations; every example of the triumph of truth and righteousness; every augmentation in the force of public opinion in a direction conformable to Christian principles,—are indications of the progress of *restorative* power in the world in opposition to the ruinous influences of the enemy. All forms of human advancement; all approximations to the true standard of manhood; social progress in its best sense; moral amelioration even in its fainter movements,—humanity, tenderness, beneficence, freedom and confidence more widely circulated, and working good in many ways, rendering Nature herself growingly responsive to the wants and the enterprise of man,—less straitened by the curse—more and more blest and blessing from one

age to another,—these all mark the progress of the *judgment*, which, while it *relieves* man, *curtails* successively the resources of the adversary, and exalts the wisdom, grace, and power of the Mediator.

Individual salvation another proof.

But the *spiritual* power of the Gospel in individuals discloses the master-movement of the Deliverer. *Soul* rescue is the soul of his kingdom, and the triumph of his sovereignty over the Evil One. It is the highest action of Omnipotence upon human nature, and the strongest leverage that can be applied to the world at large.

The opprobrium couched in that phrase, 'the men that have turned the world upside down,' bears witness to the momentum of the primitive ministry on the mass of crime and irreligion comprised in the world which then was. It resembled the earthquake and the tumult that melted away the hosts of the Philistines when Jonathan and his armour-bearer made their single-handed onslaught. The movement was as deep as it was sudden and inexplicable. True, this movement has been arrested, and the serpent has again lifted up his fallen crest, returning with new resources to the fight; but the *tactics* subsequently adopted, namely, the corruption of Christianity, though his master-plot — show the extremity to which he was reduced, since he dared to seize the very weapon Omnipotence had prepared for his destruction; thus sealing his own doom.

On the whole, it may be confidently affirmed that the world has progressed, though to human eyes slowly, from the hour of the Saviour's enthronement until now. It is not, however, by a comparison of one portion, or one age of the world with another, that we obtain a full view of a fact

like this. It requires that the world of *eighteen centuries* ago and the world of *to-day* should be put together, and the leading features of each traced out by a process as philosophic as it is christian. Of the conclusion to be established by such a task, it is scarcely possible to doubt. Influences are abroad in the world which portend still greater good for the future than the past; while the suddenness and rapidity which, in our own time, mark the movements of evangelism, show with what a swoop Heaven may come down on the territories of the enemy, 'leading captivity captive,' and making 'a short work on the earth.'

The judgment of deposition in its effects on man.

Turning for a while to the aspects of the 'judgment' upon men as distinguished from its effects upon the adversary, these may be noticed as twofold—the judgment of deliverance, and the judgment of penalty.

The preliminary work of the Spirit always judicial.

The preparatory work of the Spirit in the human heart shows that the law of God is the instrument employed in bringing the sinner to repentance. The judgment is, in this instance, 'to condemnation;' nor should it be forgotten, that throughout the great preliminaries of personal redemption, the Spirit never merges his *judicial* character in that of a mere liberator from the guilt and power of sin. Whether it is the Law or the Gospel which he applies to the conscience; whether it be hope or fear which he inspires; whether he lay upon the heart the burden of guilt, or open the abyss of its depravity to view; whether he shut up the man in bondage and helplessness, or allure him to the Saviour by shedding into him the light of his goodness, —*primarily*, his operations bear a *judicial* aspect.

Nor can there be *mercy without judgment.* Sin cannot otherwise appear sin, either as a violation of law entailing doom, or as the work of Satan to be cast down and destroyed. There is, especially, a judgment of the Spirit on unbelief. It is a sin which, in its gospel aspects, stands alone in enormity and in penalty. The Spirit's office is to convince of this: he lays it upon men's consciences, and registers the sentence of Christ against it as the rejection of Himself, and as the work of the devil.

Justification an act of judgment.

Justification also, though a marvellous act of grace, is as signal an act of 'judgment,' as the very term *justification* must signify. To justify, is not merely to accept into new relations, but to discharge from old ones. Judgment, having first come upon men 'to condemnation,' comes afterwards upon them 'to justification of life.' To be justified from sin, is to be acquitted from it by a judgment of grace; and the spiritual *manumission* of man becomes its proper counterpart. 'He that is dead is freed from sin,'[1]—dead by a judgment which cancels his legal liabilities,—is handed over, in concurrence with the grateful impulse of the man himself, to another master, and to another destiny. By St Paul the whole design of the sacrifice of Christ is resolved into a work of judgment: 'For sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,' etc.[2]

Thus, the whole course of christian aspiration and christian living is but the issue of this judgment on 'sin in the flesh,' which is at once the demonstration of its reality and its glory. The same

[1] Rom. vi. 7.

[2] Rom. viii. 2.

character attaches to all residuary acts of redemption: the reception of the soul to paradise immediately after death; and also, the resurrection of the last day. These are judgments unto life—preliminaries to the final judgment, and the consummated triumphs of grace.

The withdrawal of the Spirit an act of judgment.

Counter-judgments to these are to be noted in hardening, reprobating, and destroying men for persistence in sin, and rejection of its remedy. In this, the office of the Spirit is terribly judicial, and heavily punitive: it is the imputation of guilt to condemnation, and also a judgment of *deprivation;* moral sufficiency being taken away for the abuse of it. This is a judgment of *congruity*, by which sin becomes its own penalty, exaggerating the vices of disposition and of habit: licensing, as it were, men's possession by Satan.

There is the judgment of *abandonment*,—a delivery to Satan and perdition excluding all possibility of remedy, or mitigation of doom. This judgment is also one of the immediate, as well as of the remote future, *anticipating the awards of the final day*, and putting these 'spirits sometime disobedient,' into 'prison,' there to await the resurrection, and their final punishment.

Christ's judicial power in his Church.

The judicial power of Christ is also *social* as well as personal: its principal sphere of exercise is the Church, which, as to earth, is the throne of Christ—his house, his city, his nation. It is superfluous to enlarge on the judicial aspects of the new testament Church—doctrinally, historically, and prophetically—the individuals of whom it was composed—the Apostles who presided over it—the rules of its fellowship, and the conditions of its existence as

Christ's institute for the benefit of the world. These all show that the Church was the high place of judgment, guarded by all the jealousies of holiness, as well as replenished with its beauties—the sanctuary of *righteousness*, as well as 'the pillar and ground of the truth.'

'The time is come,' said one, 'that judgment must begin at the house of God.'[1] Thus said the desolations soon to be poured upon Jerusalem which then was; thus said the judgments that befell those who first lied against the Holy Ghost; and such was the voice of that fear which came upon the Church and the people round about, at that season. Such was the language of those penal acts which the Apostles, in the name of Christ, inflicted on individuals within the Church, and which showed them to be ministers of wrath as well as of mercy, and objects of dread as well as of affection.

In short, the history of the formation and progress of the Church exhibits the administration of a kingdom 'not of this world,' and a comment on the words of Christ, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.'[2] The whole aspect of the ordinance and of the history thus given us is *judicial*. Judgment was always a reality in the profoundest sense in which our nature could be reached; though by no means uniformly attested in immediate and sensible results. The rules given to, and the obligations contracted by the members of the Church, implied the presence of a Power ready to enforce them; and so did the censures or the excommunications inflicted on the faulty and the corrupt. Christ in his *judicial* character was exalted

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 17. [2] Matt. xviii. 18.

in all these arrangements; while in the opening scenes of the Apocalypse the judicial majesty and the judicial utterances of the Saviour, as in the old prophetic visions, are made most prominent. He who holds the 'stars,' and replenishes the 'candlesticks,' is a most awful image of purity—his hair is 'white as snow,' his eyes are 'a flame of fire,' and out of his mouth proceeds a 'sharp two-edged sword.'[1]

Such is the representation of the enthroned Guardian of the Church; and his language agrees with it. He cites and indicts not the *world*, but the *Church*. Judgment 'begins at the house of God,' *in foro ecclesiæ*. The Lamb is *afterwards* seen on 'the throne' judging the world; but he *first* appears in the midst of the 'candlesticks,' and searches the churches with his eyes of fire: 'And all the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and the heart; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.'[2]

The Church judicial relatively to the world.

Further, the *relative* aspects of the Church to the world are judicial; for the Church is set as an oppugnant power in the midst of it. Our Lord came 'not to send peace upon the earth, but a sword.'[3] He rules 'in the midst of his enemies;'[4] and therefore wounds 'the heads over many countries, and fills the places with the dead bodies.' As supreme Head of the nations, he judges them according to his Gospel, either as they stand in avowed opposition to its reception, or as they are practically untrue to their professed subjection to it.

National antichrists.

There is the *national antichrist:* people politically set against the name and claims of Jesus Christ.

[1] Rev. i. 16. [2] Rev. ii. 23. [3] Luke xii. 51. [4] Ps. cx.

The Jews are an example of this antichrist. The old pagan kingdoms, specially the Roman empire, furnish similar instances: and in modern times, the nations of Islamism afford striking examples of the *professed* antichrist. These, as *powers*, he breaks to pieces 'like a potter's vessel.'[1] These either have already passed away, or are in process of decline. Christ judges and destroys them in succession. No antichristian power can ultimately survive; its downfall is only a question of time.

Doctrinal antichrists.

There is the *doctrinal* antichrist. Such were the many antagonist systems to Christianity even in the apostolic age—partly Judaic, partly Pagan; partly mongrel compounds of Judaism or of Philosophy with gospel tenets,—the more seductive, as they were to some extent *resemblances*, and did not altogether part company with 'the truth.' But these clouds of the morning were destined to meet and to overspread the sky of the gospel age—to grow in breadth and density, till an eclipse of faith long and total, should consummate this 'mystery of iniquity.'

A false church *the* antichrist.

But the great antichrist must be a *false church*, on whatever society this may be fastened: its seat is the 'temple of God,' not the world—the image of jealousy and blasphemy in the Holy Place. The ideal of this antichrist is that of a power *usurping the name and authority of Christ*, and setting up a counter-kingdom to his, under names and pretensions simulating 'the truth;' deceiving the nations by this device. The antichrist is here the resemblance between the coin and the counterfeit; the original and the copy; the divine ideal and the

[1] Ps. ii.

human caricature; the truth and the lie, which nevertheless is clothed, like its author, as 'an angel of light.' This is *the antichrist*, whether called Babylon, or bearing the name of 'the holy city'—the mother of harlots, though in semblance 'the Lamb's wife.' It is his name, his religion, his prestige, turned against himself: a poison compounded of his own medicine: a parody on the Gospel—not even a bad edition of it—not a gem in unworthy settings, but a *substitute*, and that substitute a shining fraud.

What methods 'judgment' may adopt, or what instruments it may employ for the destruction of this antichrist, none may safely undertake to predict. What part wars or social changes may play in the great drama of its downfall; what parts national distractions, political complications, or the progress of civilisation and human development may have assigned to them in this direction, may be hidden from us,—but it is clear that the war against antichrist must be one of truth against error, and of holiness against corruption and apostasy. The Gospel, as the 'rod of Christ's strength,' both saves and destroys: it is his testimony, which, by dispelling error, breaks up the most powerful combinations of evil that have ensnared and ruined the world.

Judgments are also dispensations rich in mercy which lay bare to the scorn and abhorrence of mankind the interior of the whited sepulchres, or the laboratories of falsehood and tyranny; which melt to their foundations, as by fire from heaven, the most colossal fabrics of superstition and blasphemy. Eras of freedom and advancement take

their rise from the dates of these judicial demolitions, and the whole earth breaks forth into singing at the sound of their fall. Such an event was the great Reformation of the fifteenth century; and such, though immeasurably greater, the event or events of the future, which will *perfect* what was then only *begun*.

Infidelity a protean antichrist.

There is also what may be denominated the *infidel* antichrist—the avowed, not masked enemy to the claims of Jesus—a proteus in fickleness of form; and a chameleon in changeableness of colour: everything in turn — sensual, blasphemous, or philosophical, as times and seasons favour its transformations. A rude assailant, an audacious bully, or an oily foe—a doubter or a transcendentalist—a social reformer, or a pretentious philanthropist.

While the spread of infidelity and atheism is, in some instances, due to the prevalence of a corrupt or inert Christianity; it is as traceable in others to the action of intellectualism uncontrolled by moral principles, and affecting to establish the sole supremacy of Reason over every department of human interest. Equally devoid of reverence and modesty, it towers presumptuously over 'all that is called God, or that is worshipped:' its flight, unchecked by either the dictates of experience, or those of revealed truth, ends in a dark vacuity; or like the serpent, it is doomed to feed and burrow in the dust. True to this its great prototype, the antichrist of infidelity continually exhibits the combination of demon and brute: it makes knowledge a higher thing than duty, and sets the one against the other. Belief is childhood; unbelief, manly freedom. Sense is courted as the ally of this bastard reason;

and to die like the beast, still proclaimed the apotheosis of man.

Happily, the heterogeneous elements created by unbelief cannot combine themselves into any powerful systems adapted to bear sway over the world, or the sorest plagues which could befall the race would be the surcharge of such combinations. Whether these, indeed, be possible, is perhaps the great problem of the future: they may be destined to exhibit the *counterpart to the antichrist of superstition* after the latter has fallen, and to form the climax of those works of the devil which shall usher in his overthrow, and the universal reign of Christ over man.

The antichrist of civilisation.

There is, moreover, what may be called the *social* antichrist, the product of certain advanced stages of civilisation; the drift of this is to shut out Religion from all influence over human affairs, and to work out all social problems without its authority and aid. On this theory, it is implied, if not avowed, that human nature is supreme in the social system: no Providence is recognised beyond the notion of certain natural laws admitting no deflection or turning-points beyond the bare action of human nature upon itself, either personally or relatively considered: much less is there any such *moral* administration by Heaven as either medicates or controls human depravity. All moral influences are merely human appliances, and all ameliorative progress is but the success of human endeavour.

The spirit of this antichrist of civilisation and science is not so much oppugnancy as indifference to Religion. It is too deeply engrossed with its

own resources and projects, to turn its weapons against Religion, which it rather *ignores* than combats: it neither seeks it as an ally, nor assails it as an enemy.

The political and social axioms of this antichrist are bare negations as far as Christianity is concerned, and its political and social movements fruitful developments of its *atheistic* character. For in this condition of society there is no longer a conflict waged between false religions and the true one; nor are questions of this class dealt with any longer as if a verdict had been taken for 'the truth:' henceforth, *all* religions are treated alike; they are looked upon as *subjective* things—equally the product of human nature in its proteoform career, and to subsist or perish as that nature may supplant them, or, like Medea, devour its own offspring.

It is obvious that the animus of society in such a condition as this, while it supplies the elements of open infidelity in abundance, is yet more adverse to Christianity than infidelity itself. The broad masses of unreclaimed mind everywhere surrounding it, and, as it were, crystallized into this state by its presence, form the most impenetrable barrier to its progress, rendering nothing less than miracle sufficient for their evangelic transmutation.

Apocalyptic illustrations of these antichrists.

Glancing at the Apocalypse, we observe a pictorial representation of the world under the dominion of 'the Lamb,' in striking accordance with its history and present condition in a moral point of view. In its successive scenes, we see everywhere but in the last, the counter-image to his character, and conspiracy on a vast scale, ever re-

sisting his claims. The whole field of vision is one of tumult and confusion, full of hostile forms and forces marshalled against the Prince of Grace. It is more properly 'the book of the wars of the Lord' than any which anciently bore that name, whether residuary or defunct. The plot thickens and becomes more and more portentous as it unfolds itself: no end appears, and no progress is made in reducing the wild and prolific chaos of rebel mind to order and peace. Its resources seem only to be brought out in more appalling force by the measures taken for quelling them, and to be merely *tested* by the greatness of His resources who evokes them. Nothing is passive, and yielding as to a plastic force, though that force be omnipotent. The demon, though routed oft, is not quelled, but as oft returns to the fray. The mines of his cunning, and the means of his warfare, are not by and by exhausted: his strategy is taxed, and his instruments called into play in new and strange forms, till, like Daniel, we inquire what shall be the end of all these things; and faith is our only prognostic as to the nature of the catastrophe.

Though the grand preliminaries to the triumph of righteousness in the earth have long been settled, the struggle would seem hardly to have begun in earnest, and the empire of the Saviour to be won inch by inch. But, however strange or improbable, on any *à priori* theory, such a notion may appear, where the rule of an Almighty Being over creatures is concerned; yet it is no less true to fact than to Scripture, that evil does thus struggle to maintain itself in all but unabating ascendancy. Good is a *militant* principle all the

world over; and is only slowly, and almost equivocally, pushed forward by the comparatively few and scattered adherents, who, under all its fortunes, range themselves by the standard of 'the Lamb.'

It is no wonder, therefore, that so large a part of this prophetic book is strikingly *judicial*, and that the benigner features of the Saviour's rule are almost overlaid by them. The reason is, that the gentler forms of his rule are too commonly set at naught by the world, and his saving purposes thwarted to a fearful extent. Mercy refused is justice defied, which therefore takes up a double cause, and pours its avenging vials on the earth in plagues and destructions. The world of the sealed book is not, as a whole, a scene of renewal, a mirror of grace, an image of heaven; and history is answerable to this vision. The non-subject state of the world to Christ is the true key to its dark and troubled condition, its phases of change and desolation — of unsteadiness and retrocession, of restlessness and vanity — and of its everlasting birth-throes which bring forth no deliverance.

Whatever, therefore, may be the incompetency we confess to in dealing with this book, there is no difficulty in identifying its *main characters* with the *facts* of the world. They are as the die on the seal to the image on the wax: 'he may run that reads them.' Nor are the *details* of the plot, though withheld, of much importance, since the outlines are so patent, and the catastrophe so glorious. Two elements of religion—duty and expectancy—are thus amply provided for; while a vain curiosity only could be gratified by the knowledge of what remains hidden.

The great assize the climax of judgment.

Our Lord's judicial work comprises THE LAST ASSIZE: this forms its climax and consummation. As a moral government implies the administration of a moral law, and this again, the distribution of rewards and punishments; so this must devolve, of right and fitness, on Him who holds supremacy over the human race. He has told us that he has 'authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man'[1]—the universal Lord, in virtue of his universal affinity with the race. He owns all the primitive honours of the federal man, together with all the prerogatives of Deity, and those acquired by his mediatorial acts. All crown-rights proper to a person representing *both the creature and the Creator* centre in Christ; and as they all centre in his person, so do they depend on his administration for their perfect illustration in results.

It were to little purpose, and altogether beside our present point, to investigate at large the subject of the Judgment; much less to expatiate on the *scenic* aspects of such a work as this. Our Lord's own account of the event, together with every apostolic notice shows that the general judgment was not meant to be brought within the compass of the human intellect, but merely to be explicitly affirmed, and arrayed in such a style of thought and language as might best convey *impression* on a subject far removed beyond all human comprehension, and probably beyond that of all intelligents whatsoever. These, as well as ourselves, must wait for 'the *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God,' as an event which has hitherto been without precedent in the history of the universe, and which shall admit of

[1] John v. 27.

no like event afterwards. It may be pertinent, however, to suggest several lines of thought which open to us from a view of our Lord's judicial eminency.

A race-judgment the correlative of Christ's headship.

(1.) His relation to man as a *race-relation*, requires that his judgment be essentially a *race-judgment;* and as such, it must therefore be executed in a *race-form.* The object of the Judgment very mainly, is to demonstrate the relations and issues of the human race in respect to HIM; *mediately only* in respect to God. The *extent* as well as nature of his empire over man can only be demonstrated by a general resurrection, and a general award. His power, holiness, love, and redemptional action, must impress their characters on all the human nature that ever existed as the subject of his undertaking; and this seems to require that the whole stock of manhood should be arrayed before him as its KING, and learn from HIMSELF the issues of his rule on their destiny *as a race,* as well as individually.

The judgment public and universal.

There are acts of government which, from their significance and national bearing, must be *public;* they are separated from the ordinary flow of legislative administration by their connection with the existence of the nation—its constitution, dignity, and well-being. As all are interested in them, so *all* must take part in them, and show sympathy with them. There are likewise some things in the career of God's empire which stand out from others, of such grandeur of character and magnitude of consequence, that all other things seem arranged to produce them, and to be so associated with them as for ever to reflect their glory. THE JUDGMENT is such an event. All things preceding it are but its

shadows; all things following it are but its glory. It is not only the grand epoch in *human* history, but, as it would seem, in that of the universe. The person and the official history of the Judge are themselves a foregoing epitome of all judgment in principle, and of all its outgoings, past and to come. He is, in a judicial sense, 'the Sun of righteousness.' Even were there no immediate extension of his prerogatives as Judge to any other orders of being beyond our own, the lustre of this assize could not be less than universal, and must make itself felt in every realm of moral power whatsoever.

A race-judgment collective.

But as it respects man, as the race personally represented by the Judge, and standing nearest to the judgment-seat, its glory is chiefest. That race which now perishes in detail, and fades into nothingness, may, when evoked and collected, show itself to be by far the broadest field for the range of judicial prerogative, and to be so fitted for its illustration as to render all other examples secondary and subordinate. A *race-judgment, then, must be collective and public;* a personal judgment may not require this. It may be complete if administered singly. As this is actually the divine method, to a certain extent, foregoing, so might it be completely carried out, were no *race-peculiarity* to be unfolded by a general judgment.

It may illustrate this point, if we call to mind that the existing economies of providence and grace are constructed on the *race-principle*, and cannot be understood but as this truth is steadily regarded. Man is viewed by his Maker in his race-unity: from this point all his measures take their

rise, and reach their goal. The Judgment is, therefore, but an *example* of this truth, and the final application of the principle of which Christ may be said to be 'the Author and Finisher.'

Man the subject of a complex economy resting on Atonement.

(2.) The Judgment seems to assume this collective form, when we consider that it is the application of the divine rectitude to a creature of very peculiar constitution, and the subject of a very complex economy. In this instance, there is not only to be recognised a broader class of principles, but an application of them yielding infinite diversity of result. Men cannot be treated merely as innocent, nor condemned as guilty: they are neither angels nor devils: their *existence and probation* are based on Mediation. Practically, they never lived under *any other than mediational relations and influences.*

Hence, the very justice that is brought to bear upon them is ruled by these facts, and is, in truth, derived from this source. No human being, not excepting Adam himself, is judged by the Adamic law, but by *the law of grace.* The application of the former to the human race is impossible, and is plainly set aside by the appointment of the Mediator to be the sole Judge of men. The rule of judgment, or rather the *principle* of it, arises out of the relations established between the race and Christ by virtue of his redemption, and must, therefore, limit itself to the application of the moral status springing out of it:—beyond this it cannot go. Thus, judgment is a gracious equity, of which the ATONEMENT is the fountain, and by which every act and state of man will be determined as for or against the purposes which that sacrifice was ap-

Christ only can apply the rule.

pointed to fulfil. *Of these, he alone who offered that sacrifice, and has based his throne upon it, can be the judge;* applying his rule so perfectly, that each shall as truly represent its character as the whole.

A collective judgment required by the nature of the economy.

But the moral diversity of such an economy, as well as the breadth of it, seems to require that the Judgment should be collective and simultaneous. Its existence is one thing—its demonstration another; and, though now 'it is the glory of God to conceal a thing,' it may hereafter be just as truly his glory to reveal it; in fact, the one implies the other. In order to this revelation, it is plain that the entire race must be brought together; the whole cannot be seen in its detail, nor in glimpses of its integral parts. A family, a nation, or an age, can only show us fractions of the grand total of humanity, and can give us no idea of the sublimity and perfection of that economy which, based on Redemption and ending in the Judgment, comprises the whole sweep of the world's duration, and the countless millions who have tenanted it from the days of Adam to the hour of doom. This mass must be exhibited; this mass must be analysed by the Judgment. Its moral lineaments will be compared or contrasted—the *extremes* of good and evil—the *intermediate* and related, but still differenced—the initial and the perfect. All agencies will be seen in their agents; all principles in their human embodiments; all causes and effects cleared of obscurity, and revealed in their own colours and dimensions. There, and then, the shade of all false systems will lie upon their votaries: the Cross will bloom in the glory of its sanctified millions; and the poison of unbelief surcharge as with the cup

of wrath from God's own hand, every member of that self-elated band who gloried in their shame, and who bent all their wits to cozen themselves and others into the assurance that the Gospel was a lie.

The final judgment one of award.

(3.) The *declaratory* nature of the Judgment is also indicated by its collective form of administration. To a great extent, that judgment is anticipated by the conditions of the intermediate state, and by the distinctive characters of the resurrection also. The fulness of award, whether of good or evil, is indeed its *consequence;* but the moral status and its collateral conditions are antecedents of the Judgment, both with respect to the dead and the living. The resurrection is '*unto* life,' or '*unto* damnation;' but all are not and cannot be perfectly treated as righteous or wicked, until the great assize has passed upon them. The imperfections of human judicature render an approximation to this course impossible; but it is characteristic of the divine, which admits of and requires *concurrent* award with character, *progressive* award with existence; and *climacterick* award as public and final.

The gist of all notices of the Judgment in Scripture is, that it is a day of *revelation*—not one of inquisition, but of award—not of abnegation and proof, of disclaimer or confession, but simply of supreme judicial behest. The moral universe lighted up by Omniscient Holiness unveiling all its heights and depths at once, while Omnipotent Justice pervades the whole scene, and in individual detail; the harvest of the world is gathered with one sickle, and in one season. What are all minds in *this* light, but motes in the sunbeam? and what the

whole world of men or of matter, but the small dust of the balance?

The Judgment closes the mediatorial dispensation.

(4.) Our Lord's relation to the judicial issues of the world's economy, determines the *position* which the Judgment shall fill in the history of his administration. Its mediational characters determine that its place is at the *close* of man's history as a race. Till that race is numerically complete, the materials for the Judgment are imperfect, and the dispensation under which they are preparing cannot be closed: it is still open, and awaits the future, as it comprehends all the past of the world.

The judicial is an epoch of *transition* from all the preceding conditions of the world's existence. Recovering and probationary elements are done with; the race altogether withdrawn from mundane life, and, fledged for destiny, hovers on the verge of eternity. Well may that be called 'the Last Day,' 'the Great Day,' 'the Day of Christ,' 'the Day of God,' which casts its light backward to the dawn of Creation, and forward through all the cycles of Eternity,—which, empowering us to read the sealed book of the world from its first letter to its last, impresses itself in indelible characters on our own consciousness, and on every form of being with which we hold fellowship, however it may have been severed by the facts of its history within the living universe of God.

It ushers in a new state of unchangeable stability.

(5.) The administration of the final judgment by Christ as mediatorial Sovereign, while it determines the event itself to be unique, determines also the *unchanging stability* of the order of things which is its issue. Not only will there be no problems of government remaining unsolved, or not virtually

included in this issue; the Judgment itself as a mediational act, is God's pledge to the universe that its behests are fixed and unchangeable. Were it a judgment founded on other principles, this truth might not be established; other judgment-days might still be in reserve, representing other conditions of moral subjection, and perfecting other forms of moral probation. But the doctrine of *mediational adjudication* allows us to go neither backward nor forward in tracing the course of divine rule. *This* judgment is a fixed standpoint from which it is to be surveyed to its utmost bound of finite conception.

To re-initiate the *conditions* of existence under which our race at least has spent itself, is plainly impossible; for the mediational system *has expired, and cannot be restored.* This would be to *undo* what had been done and publicly sealed by the judgment of Heaven,—commencing *de novo* an order of things only appropriate in its own time and place. To what purpose can we conceive the whole history of the world to be cancelled, and the race of man to begin again, retracing its long and troublous history as if it had never been? Is every man to be born and to die again, that the same or similar results may follow? or that the world's programme, or its execution, may be somewhat amended? God does not thus repeat himself, or rather, undo his own work. Should his Son be again incarnate, and again travail and suffer to redeem—what must in fact be—a new race of men on the earth? The Judgment, founded on the whole foregoing history of man and his redemption by Christ, is a solemn winding up of the economy on which it is based, and which

looks to this as its proper end. There *can* be no going backward: all the building underlying this top-stone is built up for ever, and is firmer than heaven and earth.

Mediation temporary, otherwise it becomes co-ordinate with Law.

The same reasons that show that the Judgment forbids all retrogressive movements in the moral programme of the universe, show also that the stability of its *issues* can never be cancelled by any reserves in the counsels of God. Nothing but Mediation *re-opened* could do this: but Mediation re-opened is taken out of its legitimate position as *an expedient of government of a special nature, and converted into its own end.* By this, Mediation would plainly become a *counteractive* principle instead of a *corroborative* one. Instead of strengthening government, it must weaken it, and abate rather than exalt its glory. Mediation cannot be more than a *special expedient* sovereignly originated, and sovereignly limited, without becoming a *co-ordinate* principle of the divine rule with the administration of Law—an assumption fatal to the idea of its *independent perfection*, both as a rule for creatures, and as a manifestation of God by this means.

As far as Mediation is concerned, government may exist in full integrity without it: Mediation is not *essential*, but *appended* to government. It is an extraneous element introduced, not because it is *necessary*, but because God has willed it, not only to show its compatibility with government, but by means of it to enable government itself to compass more exalted ends,—namely, the fuller manifestation of his character, and the larger happiness of his creatures.

It is clear, therefore, both from Scripture and reason, that the Judgment, standing where it does, as the closing act of Mediation, stamps an *absolute immutability* on all the destinies of the future. Both those who have and those who have not been directly subject to it, are equally removed from the sphere of moral change. The arrangements are obviously at an end under which such change was possible; while, even under this limited economy, it was only partially admissible. The conditions under which Law may be relaxed as seen in the history of redemption, are in their nature such as cannot be *renewable*, and such as totally preclude the notion of *cyclic* restoration. The Judgment is intended to demonstrate this: it puts the finis and seal on the *future* as well as on the *past:* it is an arch that spans them both. Good and evil not only have the space of eternity into which they expand themselves, but their lines of demarcation are strictly changeless, and their proportions to each other remain identical for ever.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Its Economy.

Church answerable to congregation in the Old Testament.

The word church seems answerable to that of congregation throughout the Old Testament. It imports separation as the fruit of election: in the former instance, from gentile nations; and in the latter, from the world of unbelievers, whether Jew or Gentile. It may have been familiarly used in our Lord's time, to signify the nation when assembled in Jerusalem at its great annual festivals for worship; for the stated gatherings within the temple; or for the assemblies which met within the synagogues.

It is a point of some consequence to notice, that the word church, wherever it occurs in the New Testament, familiarly recognises an institution long in existence, and which, therefore, there was no necessity either to define or explain, any more than the Passover, Sacrifice, Priesthood, or Circumcision. If this be not assumed, the introduction and use of the word church by our Lord and his apostles, is unintelligible. In its New Testament sense it must have been understood to be a new institution springing out of an old one; an ingraft upon an existing stock, like the Eucharist on the Passover,

or like Baptism on Circumcision. This assumption is in perfect unison with the leading features of the New Testament economy, which, as we have seen, draws all its principles from the Old. Thus, all that was needed in the new economy was found at hand: reconstruction or re-adaptation only of existing institutes was needed to fit them for this end.

The Head of the Theocracy, the Head of the Church.

A second point of importance in the same direction, is the position of Christ as Lord of the Church, derived from his foregoing position as head of the Theocracy, and Lord of the Congregation. In accordance with the principles of this treatise, which traces mediatorial sovereignty through the Old Testament to the New, this Headship is to be expected as a legitimate culmination. The Messiah, as the incarnate Lord of the Hebrew commonwealth, must be the head of the new and spiritual commonwealth designed to take the place of the old one. It was, therefore, on the part of Christ, an oracle of creative significance which he uttered in response to Peter's confession, 'Thou art the Christ,' etc.: 'On this rock will I build my Church,'—the Jehovah of the Old Testament here giving effect to his own prophetic utterance on this point: 'Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare.'

A third point of importance in illustration of the true character of the New Testament Church, lies in the relations unfolded by our view of Christ's headship, between this and the Old Testament Church. These are such as may be expressed by type and antitype: Jerusalem or Zion stood as the representative of the ancient church, because Jehovah dwelt there, was worshipped, and communi-

cated with by his covenant people. Jerusalem, as the capital of the hebrew nation, was the great church-seat and centre; according to the language of the 68th Psalm, it was the mountain that God delighted to dwell in, and where his people saw his glory.

Christ's presence constitutes the true Jerusalem.

The removal of the same Divinity in his incarnate form, from this consecrated spot, to 'the heavenly places,' made the Jerusalem of the future essentially a spiritual and unseen city: in the New Testament, this truth is more than once recognised as one of the capital distinctions of the last dispensation. Then, indeed, God 'had ascended up on high,' having 'led captivity captive,' and received gifts for men, 'that the Lord God might dwell among them.'

It is simply in respect to the heavens being the seat of Christ's presence for the world, that we have the name and the scenes of Jerusalem brought before us in the New Testament, as an existing and sublime reality; and it is this same fact which for ever settles the main questions respecting *the condition and prospects of the christian church.* It is hence determined, that there can be no fixed and visible centre of New Testament Church administration, either in Jerusalem, as the ancient religious capital of the world restored, or in the great gentile city which still affects this position, as once she was the mistress of the civilised world.

No visible centre of the New Testament Church possible.

The great scripture found in Heb. xii. 22, is so pertinent, and decisive in this discussion, that nothing remains but to quote it at length, with a brief comment on the chief matters which it com-

prehends. On no other ground than that of a dispensation answerable to the types of Judaism, could it have been said of a congregation or congregations of christian Hebrews, that they were 'come to Mount Zion;' and that the unbelieving mass of their countrymen, whether in Jerusalem or the provinces, were come to Mount Sinai,—that they had never, in truth, reached the end of their journey as prescribed by the law itself, but had settled about 'the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire.'

Again, the 'innumerable company of angels' is mentioned; the host once attached to the nation of the covenant, and to the worshippers of the temple. This host had now taken wing from the former sphere of its ministry—had been gathered up in a body within the 'heavenly Jerusalem,' and about the throne of Jesus Christ, to be by him sent forth as 'ministering spirits'—not to the nation of Israel, but to the 'heirs of salvation:' they have forsaken Palestine, and dispread themselves, like the winds, to the ends of the earth.

Jerusalem a type of the Church in its twofold state.

Then follows the evangelical antitype to the old congregation (composed chiefly of born Israelites mingled with proselytes from many lands)—'the general assembly and church of the first-born written in heaven;' *i.e.*, the whole company of christian disciples scattered through all countries, never brought together in the flesh; one in spirit; various in the accidents of their profession; yet of 'the same body,' and partakers of the same Spirit,—not 'enrolled' in the lists of Israel according to the flesh, nor acknowledged as the seed of Abraham by his descendants, yet 'written in the Lamb's book

of life.' This is the description of the Church Catholic: it consists of 'the first-born,' *i.e.*, of all who, believing 'that Jesus is the Christ,' are 'born of God.'

Then follows the glorious note of New Testament worship: they come 'to God the Judge of all:' this single truth shows the transcendental character of the evangelical church over the legal one. The worship of the latter was not the worship of the Father, but of the Son. The worship of the one is *distinctively*, *not*, as in the other, *implicitly*, the worship of 'the Father.' Our Lord announced a new and surpassing oracle to the woman of Samaria, when he said, 'The hour is coming, in which the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' The whole doctrine of our Lord's ministry and mission is founded on this single truth; while all the doctrinal and practical teachings of the apostles only reiterate and amplify it.

Characteristic difference in the worship of the old and new dispensation.

But what are we to understand by the following clause: 'the spirits of just men made perfect'? Is it merely a description of saints deceased as having *completed* their course of service on earth? Or does it intimate superadded *moral perfection*, as the consequence of their being disburdened of the flesh, and of the temptations and trials of an earthly lot? Such significations may not, perhaps, be inconsistent with the letter of the text, but they appear to fall short of the fully interpreted scope of it. The apostle does not appear to speak of 'just men,' so much as of their 'spirits,' or of their *disembodied state*— of acquisitions supposed to be brought to them either before, or *in articulo mortis;* much less after-

wards, a supposition which might somewhat countenance the doctrine of a *middle state*. But is there any other feasible interpretation than such as may be resolved into these two? The third, and seemingly the true one, assigns this perfection of the 'spirits of just men' to something *relational* rather than essential; *i.e.*, to their position in 'the heavenly Jerusalem' as a part of the body mystical of Christ, the other part of which is supposed to be still on the earth.

The perfection of the 'spirits of just men' relational, not moral.

In this sense, the perfection of 'the spirits of just men' became a necessary qualification to their oneness with the whole Church under Christ; for it is obvious that they could neither come to us, nor we to them, without this condition of catholic unity. Redemption is throughout, only the progressive development of the person and prerogatives of the Mediator. There is a sense in which, until the resurrection, the whole Church remains imperfect; and there is a sense in which the Church is already perfect through an union with her Head. As it respects the former, there is a sense in which all acts of grace prevenient to the advent, the atonement, and the ascension, were imperfect: they were based on prospective, not on accomplished facts; and must have borne an exact correlation, whatever this might imply, to the phases of Mediation as these arose out of the future.

Mediatorial realities the attributes of the new dispensation.

The final teaching of this wonderful scripture is equally pregnant and completing. The last of the three great distinguishing points of the new dispensation is, that it possesses the person and office of the Mediator entire. We come 'to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant,' without any interven-

ing person or power—any ritual, priest, or intercessor—utterly apart from a local centre, and prescriptions of any kind. His one office is ubiquitous and entire for all persons, all places, and all ages. All true disciples are equally citizens of this 'heavenly Jerusalem,' and hold immediate converse with all her glorious mysteries.

Thus, in this one scripture the two estates of the Church are broadly distinguished—the visible and the invisible; and both descriptions are equally complete. The true Church on earth consists of the actual subjects of Christ's administration from 'the heavenly places:' the 'general assembly' comes to, and dwells in this 'holy mount,' encircled by its sanctity, and partakers of its glory. It is simply the counterpart, though in a vastly lower condition, of 'the spirits of just men made perfect'—of the men who walk the skies, and of 'the multitude which no man can number, of every nation, and people, and tongue, who stand before the throne, and before the Lamb.'

As a society of men, the Church must be arrayed in a human garb, and with a mien in accordance with its scheme and objects. Still this is but the *vestment* of the inner life: the life itself is all divine, and its bent heavenly. As the cloud was material which betokened the divine presence, and which therefore symbolized Deity itself; so is the Church outwardly earthly, but inwardly heavenly, and the very shadow of that 'Jerusalem which is above,' casting her image strongly and broadly over the earth beneath.

St Paul, after a description of the prerogatives of Christ (to which, it would seem, as if nothing

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Christ's Headship of the Church, his supreme form of dominion.

could be added),—yet, over and above all this, and to mark it both as a supplement and summary—says, 'And he is the Head of the body, the Church.'[1] Over all forms of dominion which appertain to him 'by whom all things consist,' the Church thus stands pre-eminent: it consists by him as the immediate and proper issue of his administered redemption to his people, and by them to the world. Accordingly, the earliest record of church existence ascribes its origin and increase to Christ: 'The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.' The ordinance of baptism, and the confession of his name, were his authorized preliminaries into this new congregation of saved men. He is throughout, named 'the Lord,' 'the Lord Jesus'—terms of the highest sovereign import, and in this connection, strongly suggestive of his prerogatives in the Church.

The very name Christian, so early fastened on the followers of Jesus, is also strikingly indicative of his Lordship over the Church. This was that 'new name,' according to Isaiah,[2] which the mouth of the Lord should name. To this our Lord himself seems to allude in the Revelation, as a promissory inscription on his true followers, and the last badge of their distinction: 'I will write on him my new name.'[3] Viewed as an unfulfilled and consummative promise of Christ, such words are, doubtless, of indescribable import; but they obviously reflect the Name distinctive of the New Covenant, as that of Jehovah was of the Old: 'They shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.'[4] These scriptures collated show

[1] Col. i. 18. [2] Isa. lxvi. 2. [3] Rev. iii. 12. [4] Num. vi. 27.

the two great covenant names, Jehovah and Christ, as appellatives of the same Being assigned to the Church in the two great epochs of her history. The latter is marked thus; 'The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.'[1] The name, whether oracularly given or not, contained the formal recognition of Christ as Head of the Church, or Lord of the Congregation, and his sovereign rights in them on whom his name was called. It was like the change of Jacob into Israel—the Supplanter into the Prince of God. As importing a covenant relation, it was equivalent to a marriage contract, in which the bride receives a new name—that of the Spouse—the Lord, the Christ.

The name Christian the recognition of Christ's headship.

The Lordship of Jesus over the Church is, moreover, strongly asserted in his appointment of the ordinance commemorative of his all-atoning death. To none but 'the Lord' could it belong to exalt his own death into a perpetual symbol to faith, and a sacramental bond of fellowship to his people. Such an appointment was just as sovereign as that of the Passover, and as unrepealable as the Gospel itself; while, as an ordinance of Christ, it shadows forth the mystery of his office as the Shepherd of his flock, and the foundation on which this office rests. Not only is the Supper the memorial of the Atonement, but the voucher for the living, all-sufficient, presence of Christ in his Church. At once a symbol and a seal, it requires the omnipotent Lord of Grace to verify it to the uttermost, pledging His resources to this effect.

The Lordship of Christ asserted by the ordinance of the Supper.

Even if stript of its sacrificial associations, and more recondite features as an ordinance, it is im-

[1] Acts xxi. 6.

possible to conceive that any Power but the Head of the Church, in the highest possible sense of the phrase, could have left this as an injunction to his followers always, and everywhere: 'Do this in remembrance of ME.' The *ground* of the injunction is inapplicable to any being but *Himself:* 'This is my body which is given for you.'[1] Hence the force of the inspired expression, 'the body and blood of the Lord;' 'the Lord's body;' 'the cup of the Lord;' 'the table of the Lord.'[2] These expressions show that it belonged only to the divine Author of our religion to institute an ordinance like this,—that to observe it reverently, was to hold communion with the mystery of his office, while homaging his authority; and that to neglect or to profane it, was to disown or dishallow his very name.

The Sabbath the Lord's day.

A similar observation may be offered on the ordinance of the Sabbath. Jesus had previously claimed this holy day as his own; for, said he, 'the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath-day;'[3] while the interpretation of the sabbatic law contained in the comprehensive words, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,'[4] was, in fact, a sovereign oracle, which not only carried back the origin of the day so far as to rid it of any existing restrictions, but which pointed to his own purpose to re-adapt and extend it to the whole world.

That Christ removed the Sabbath a day forward in honour of his own resurrection, and by his authority allied it with the public meetings and spiritual action of his Church, is as strong a proof of supremacy, as was that which re-appointed and

[1] Luke xxii. 19.
[2] 1 Cor. x. 16.
[3] Matt. xii. 8.
[4] Mark ii. 28.

specially sanctioned it in the wilderness. Nor can we consistently demur to the former act without impugning the latter also. The day is denominated accordingly, 'the Lord's day.'[1] He has attached it to his religion for the whole future of the world; and he stands pledged to bless it to his Church as in the beginning, and afterwards to the Jews, but more abundantly.

Thus our Lord declared himself the Creator and Redeemer of the world. The sabbatic designation given to the first day of the week as the Lord's day, is declaratory both of the *authority* by which it must ever abide in force, and of the *conditions and purposes* involved in its existence as being peculiarly Christ's own day. As 'the Lord,' his authority is stamped upon his day in perpetuity, and his power is pledged to vindicate and uphold it as the great bulwark of his religion, against the tendencies of society to corrupt or abandon it. The Sabbath is especially the public token of his people's allegiance to himself in the midst of the world—the accepted time of their worship, and of their fellowship with him as their Head; it is also his pledge to subdue and to sabbatize the world by his reign.

Sabbath observance the sign of allegiance to Christ.

Hence, to contend that the Church has no Sabbath, is the same as to contend that the Church has no Head, and that the world has no Saviour,—that a dispensation of grace may exist and prevail which drops the benediction of creation, and the dowry of innocency. It implies that to have become superfluous to the world as fallen but redeemed, which made a part of the constitution of things when man was in harmony with God, with himself,

[1] Rev. i. 10.

PART II. CHAP. XX.

and with everything surrounding him. These positions, even apart from all direct evidence in favour of the Sabbath, show, by their manifest repugnancy to reason, that anti-sabbath objections, of whatever form, are but sophisms conceived as much in ignorance of truth, as they are in the spirit of hostility to Christ, inflicting on society evils as great as their impiety is flagrant.

But whatever views may obtain on the Sabbath question, or whatever infractions mark its recognition by nations bearing the denomination of Christian, the obligation of the Church, properly so called, is clear and unchangeable. The spiritual observance of the Sabbath is her public tender of homage to her Lord. The Sabbath is bounden on her as her Lord's day, the ever recurrent memento of his works, and of his claims as the Creator and Redeemer of the world; which can, therefore, no more be superseded, than his titles can be cancelled, or the times and seasons can run counter to His purposes 'by whom all things consist.'

Mediatorial character of New Testament worship.

It is also manifest, on examining the inspired records of the Church, that its *worship* was ordained and offered to God through Jesus Christ as Lord. It is not to the forms and accidents of worship that reference is now made (though, perhaps, these may be ranked among those 'ways which be in Christ,' to which Paul alludes); but to the *nature* of it, as being not only peculiarly spiritual, but peculiarly mediational. Such is the law and principle of New Testament worship. Its offerers are gathered together in the name of Jesus Christ. Their assemblies for worship are holden by his authority; while all the acts done in them are expressly done in his name

—in compliance with his will, and in dependence on his grace as Mediator.

'No man cometh unto the Father but by me,' is the inscription on the portal of this temple, and on the altar and priesthood of this sanctuary. They who compose this privileged assembly are said to be 'sanctified in Christ Jesus,'—a comprehensive designation of their character and claims as worshippers of God. They are termed 'saints;' which, equally with the former word, signifies persons separated to holy offices, and 'acceptable' unto God as worshippers. They are also said to 'call upon the name of Jesus Christ,'[1] and to do 'all in the name of the Lord Jesus,'[2] whether in word or deed. The recognition of his presence as the great fact of christian worship, and its peculiar glory, is always implied, if not expressed, in New Testament notices of church gatherings. As citizens of the 'New Jerusalem,' the disciples come in their assemblies to Jesus 'the Mediator of the new covenant,' as they do also 'to God the Judge of all:' and the benediction of worship is to them, in all cases, the answer of his blood—'the blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than that of Abel.'[3] This is to them the sole medium of access to God, and of that correspondence with him by which Christian piety is maintained and perfected.

In truth, so essential is this doctrine to christian worship, and so characteristic of a true evangelical state, that believers are as a body designated accordingly. They are 'all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,'[4] in the same sense, and by the same phrase, as patriarchs and jewish

[1] 1 Cor. i. 2. [2] Col. iii. 17. [3] Heb. xii. 24. [4] 1 Cor. i. 2.

saints called upon the name of the Lord the God of Israel, who dwelt between the cherubim, and answered by fire. The person and the homage are in both instances the same; except that in the one case, the worship is offered to him simply as God; in the other, as God-man and Mediator. In the one, he is regarded more specifically as the *end*, in the other, as the *medium*, of worship.

Conformably with this view, it is also represented, that Christ is, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the source of grace, peace, and holiness to his people; and that he is such very specially, as he is their Lord. This is his sovereignty in its highest form, and is the great truth expressed by his session 'at the right hand of God,' and by the pentecostal gift of the Spirit. The truth thus exhibited, and to be rested in by his people, is, that all personal grace whatsoever is the bestowment of the Spirit, and the administration of Christ as Lord of the Church. This is the 'unction of the Holy One,' and the substance of his kingdom.

After the acknowledgment of the 'one God the Father,' stands the article of faith like unto it—'there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.'[1] By this we understand that his Lordship is absolute and all-administrative; that the evangelical economy in its application to individual men, by which they are saved and compacted into churches, is entirely the ordinance of his sovereign power. He is the Life, as he is the Head of the Church; and the personal status of the believer is one of in-being in Christ, and of fellowship with him *as a member of his body*. This affords

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 6.

us both the highest view of his prerogatives, and of the dignity of redeemed men. This is 'the mystery of Christ' in relation to his people—the bond of their union, and the pledge of their salvation.

The Lordship of Christ traceable in the nature of christian piety.

Further, the Lordship of Jesus may be traced in the obligations contracted by his people to offer up their nature, and to lay down their lives in his service. Christian piety is, in the radical idea of it, the service of Christ; it is, throughout, the recognition of his rights in men as the 'Lord that bought them.'[1] His death is set forth as charged with this force of obligation on the subjects of his interposition, that they are to live 'not to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again.'[2] They are forbidden to consider themselves as their 'own,' or as 'the servants of men,' even in the employments of ordinary life. Peter and Paul called themselves the servants of Jesus Christ, and viewed themselves and the rest of the apostles as working 'the work of the Lord;' while the members of the christian brotherhood generally, are described as the Lord's freemen, in allusion to the customary forms of manumission, or to the redemption of the house of Jacob from the bondage of Egypt. This act of Christ with its train of beneficent effects, is thus described by St Paul: 'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world;'[3] and thus: 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'[4]

The grounds and extent of mediatorial rights in man.

Hence, in the New Testament, sin against God

[1] 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 15.
[3] Gal. i. 4.
[4] Titus ii. 14.

is sin against Christ, who is represented as prepared to avenge it on his people: 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.'[1] The sins of idolatry, fornication, and unworthy communion in the Supper, are particularly specified. The Corinthians are warned that they 'provoke the Lord to jealousy' who commit these offences; that they were liable to be 'judged of the Lord;' 'to eat and drink to themselves damnation;' that 'the Lord is the avenger of all such;' and that the weak brother may perish 'for whom Christ died,' rendering the author of such a catastrophe an offender against Christ as the Redeemer and Lord of him so destroyed.

It is further enjoined upon members of the Church, to forbear judging one another uncharitably, on the ground that they are servants in common, and not masters one of another: 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.'[2] And hence the forcible statement of personal obligation to Christ, so conclusive of his supremacy, and of its range over man's destiny: 'None of us liveth unto himself, and none of us dieth unto himself.'[3] . . . 'For to this end Christ both died and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

Christ's supremacy essential to church order and unity.

To the same effect speak all those scriptures which relate to *the order and rule of the Church;* the duties which its members owe one to another; and their action in combination, or in *foro ecclesiæ.* The law of the Church which respects its integrity

[1] 1 Cor. x. 9. [2] Rom. xiv. 4. [3] Rom. xiv. 7.

and well-being as an organized society, is emphatically the law of Christ. He is immediately by his Spirit the Lawgiver in the midst of the Church, and its administration is provided for by his presence there as its Head.

Hence, the principles, the conscience, and the action of every one of its members, are required to be a transcript of his law in operation. While his love is the soul animating the members of the body as an organized whole, obedience to his commandments is the expression of the presence of this all-inspiring motive to christian virtue. Schisms are to be avoided, because Christ cannot be 'divided,' and is thus dishonoured. The strife and bitterness attendant on them are as the warfare of the members of the body one upon another, because they are not all alike, or may not exchange offices, though they all belong to and are appropriated by Christ as the Head. Sympathies are dignified as 'the bowels of Jesus Christ;' and sufferings for the Church are 'the sufferings of Christ,' because endured for 'his body's sake.'

Administration and ordinances of the Church by Christ's authority.

Again, the offices of the Church are *Christ's ordinances*, and their administration is always represented as conducted by his authority. To 'bind and loose,' to establish and to abrogate, to absolve and punish, were prerogatives confessedly bestowed by Christ on his apostles. As their mission was from him, so was their work effected by his co-operation; they were 'workers together with him.'[1] The signs of apostleship were from the hand of the Lord, and its seals in subjected spirits, were his 'testimony to the word of his grace.'[2] Everywhere

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 1. [2] Acts xiv. 3.

the apostles moved under his shadow, reposed on his arm, and were enthroned in the midst of the Church as his assessors.

Hence their boldness, attempered by the most scrupulous conscientiousness in the exercise of their authority. They never went beyond their warrant, distinguishing between permissions and commandments, inferences and dictations—between what was left to human reason and what was fixed by divine decree. Though bearing the rod, the apostles sparingly used it. Authority was forborne when persuasion might prevail; and power to inflict penalties such as no human arm could wield, was rarely exerted but when the dread of it failed to lead to repentance. Throughout their entire course as apostles of Christ, this august character was stamped upon their ministry. Like Moses and Joshua—who may be regarded as the two great apostles of the jewish church—they recognised the presence and glory of Christ with them, as these did the Angel-God in the conduct of the people through the wilderness to their settlement. Christ was to them the Lord, the source of all authority and power, as he had been to their predecessors in their posts of dignity and toil. They declared themselves to be insufficient 'to think anything' as of themselves, when engaged in framing the epistles of Christ—the human transcripts of a law, not like the former, 'written in stones,' but in the 'fleshy tables of the heart.'[1]

The apostles Christ's representatives and instruments.

The same principle is observable in *the permanent economy of the Church.* The elders are 'overseers' by the Holy Ghost on behoof of the Church,

The apostolic constitution permanent.

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 3.

which the Lord purchased ' with his own blood ;' and the line of succession to the ministry, though traceable by no human eye, and without record in the genealogies of men, has been maintained, and its legitimacy vindicated as his organ in the Church, and through the Church to the world.

The Church the priesthood of the world.

The Church is the only true PRIESTHOOD among the nations, charged with the offices of religion on the world's behalf—' to make prayers and intercessions,' ' and to give thanks for all men ;' and thus to avert or mitigate judgments, to procure lengthened reprieve for the guilty, to salt the earth, and to enlighten the world. While her ' wall,' great and strong, betokens her separation from the outlying regions of ungodliness, her ' gates' show that access is free to ' the saved,' and that the kings of the earth may bring their glory into her, after it has been sanctified, as were the dedicated things of old—the *spolia opima*—by being passed through the fire.

The Church spiritual, secondarily corporate.

Since, then, the leading scriptural idea of the Church is that of a society essentially spiritual, and only in a secondary sense, external and political ; and inasmuch as these two constituents of the Church are, from their nature, plainly separable, it seems to follow :—

(1.) That the Church can have *no inherent political unity affirmed of it*, because this conception is only admissible on the supposition that the *political structure of the Church does of necessity involve the presence of its spiritual life*—a thing hardly to be affirmed of Judaism, but totally repugnant to the genius of the new dispensation, in which spiritual

life, individually received, is an *historic antecedent* to Church existence and development. It is plain that a mere *inherent functionalism*, however organically perfect, is of itself utterly insufficient to insure the currency of the spiritual life, since this is both *anterior* in God's order, and transmissible only on its own proper *conditions*—conditions utterly at variance with the notion of mere political powers of reproduction: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'[1] If this argument, founded on scripture premises, be valid, the successional theory on which Popery and High Churchism are founded falls to the ground.

No church monarchy.

(2.) It is not less evident also, from the same showing, that *a church monarchy*, in the political sense—the dogma peculiar to the Papacy—is without a shadow of truth for its foundation. Whatever may have been the *origines sacræ* of church institute, whether Episcopalian or Presbyterian, *Monarchy*, in the catholic sense, is a thing utterly foreign to it; and the idea could only have been the product of long after development, expanded by circumstances, and at length ripened into actual ascendancy; just as ambition, when secularly directed, vaults by conquest into still greater prestige, till at length it is enthroned over subject nations in unchallengeable prescription.

Visible and historic identity of the Church not always traceable.

(3.) It further follows from this idea of the Church, that its *visible and historic identity* is not to be certainly traced. Humanly speaking, this may or may not happen, because it must depend mainly, if not altogether, on the preservation of its

[1] John iii. 6.

original life and scriptural characters, as things which are not, as the event shows, indefeasible. The Papacy does well, when it would make good its claims, to declare this as included in its charter —indefectibility being one of the master-principles on which that church is founded, but without the least show of proof from Scripture, and in opposition to all the evidence derived from its own history.

The Church, in the true acceptation, *has no history:* it has been too much thrust into corners by the prevalence of heresies and corruptions, and overborne by the factitious forms of secularized Christianity overloading the records of the past. The study of these records seems but to offer us the alternative of *giving up Christianity or the Church*, since these, so far from proving their coincidence, show only their all but utter severance and contrariety. What is called church history is only such in the *conventional* sense, not a record of the principles and spirit of the religion whose name it bears. So far, therefore, from the romish dogmas of visibility and catholicity being the true criteria of Church existence, they are utterly annulled by the facts of history placed in the light of the New Testament: or, if in any sense they are true, they relate to the Church in its *normal* condition, not as it has been in point of fact: they are simply descriptive of its *own inspired history*, nothing more.

The Church and its history not identical.

We are not, however, hence to infer, that the true Church, or true Churches, may not have existed during the darkest intervals of the unrecorded past, and that no witnesses to apostolic truth and

piety were co-existent with the worst periods of ecclesiastical degeneracy. It is enough for our purpose, that these, as a whole, did not stand out in wide acknowledged prominence, and that modern churches fail to trace their lineage backward to these remote progenitors, and to found thereon their claims to ecclesiastic legitimacy.

Nor does this view of the matter at all conflict with our Lord's great promise, 'that the gates of hell' should not prevail against his Church, since this can fairly mean no more than that the *race of spiritual men* should never fail, or that the Church as *his institute* should never cease to exist in the world; in both which senses the promise in our own day exhibits wonderful fulfilment, utterly apart from all questions connected with the traditions of the past. In this broad sense, the Church has no more failed because portions of its history are unknown, or not subject to ordinary human criteria of attestation, than a great nation may be said to have failed when actually living, and holding vast sway in the world, because its remoter antecedents are either pre-historical, or have not been recorded.

The Church not essentially successional.

(4.) It is to be deduced from this view of the Church, that no necessary connection exists between the Church in one age and the Church in another, in respect to human and visible embodiment. The Christianity of earlier times may have degenerated and failed; it has consequently to be renewed, as in the beginning. Hence, a *gap in church succession*, if understood in the political sense, must needs destroy it; and if once destroyed, it cannot be restored.

Succession, therefore, cannot be necessary to the

validity of a church status, or to its efficiency in any measure. Churches as old as the days of the apostles, could they *prove* their descent, would stand precisely on the *same footing* with churches of a century, or of yesterday. Antiquity is a matter of no more consequence to a church than is pedigree to our manhood. Were it otherwise, moral corruptions, to whatever extent they may have accumulated from the past, could never invalidate privileges—could never warrant reformations—must always be held to give a deadly force to excommunication, and to stamp the sin of schism with irreparably calamitous privation. To be disunited from the grand fontal centre of church existence must be to lose the entail of privilege, and to incur a *death doom*, in *all* cases. This *is* Romanism—this is *not* Christianity. What the Church has not in its corporate capacity (even by the force of its spiritual life, much less by its political function) the power to *impart*, it certainly has not the power *to take away*. Its highest function is only *instrumental*, while its lower function, apart from this, is a mere nullity.

'The Truth' the only apostolic basis of church unity.

Hence, forms of christian organization, duly claiming to be churches, may spring up in our day, either out of those immediately preceding them, or from no recognised organic predecessors, resting simply on the apostolic basis of '*the truth*,' and the exercise of personal faith in Christ. On this showing, no visible, external fellowship—such as is implied in the existence of one or more vast communities bearing the christian name—is necessary to an exhibition of '*the unity of the Spirit*,' which contains broader and deeper elements, of unity, and

consequently of fellowship, than is implied in this theory.

Visible fellowship must, from the accidents of humanity, be a contingent and circumscribed thing, though the outward expressions of this fellowship are not on this account, to be depreciated. Church federalism, and a congregational unity, are just as consistent with the requirements of christian fellowship, and with the apostolic sense of church unity, as if in point of polity the Church were what the Romanists wish to make it—a catholic monarchy, impressing its image upon all and every one of its subjects with unvarying fidelity.

Varying forms of church polity not inconsistent with catholic unity.

The Church, representing as it does an *unseen* Christ, is the repositary of his power, and the instrument of his will. Carefully constituted, with a view to its one great office, by the adoption of the social powers of humanity, and by the consecration of their whole force to a service directly antagonistic to the course of the world, its attributes of truth, love, and holiness, separate it from the surrounding mass on which it is meant to operate: with an energy derived from these qualities, it repels every element as extraneous or uncongenial not belonging *to man himself*.

Freedom and spirituality the elements of church power.

The Church is no mere interior organism of society, or an institute of national life necessary to its theoretic perfection, analogous to the theo-political system of Judaism, or its reflections in pagan kingdoms. Its marriage is nowhere in inspired history represented as with *society*, or with *nations*, but with the Lamb: nor can any supposed doctrine of development be allowed which in the least traverses the law of its constitution, and which, by

compromising its *freedom and spirituality*, must destroy its *power*.

Unfettered by local prescriptions, or political organisms, the Church transfers herself, as on the wings of the wind, to the uttermost parts of the earth, and is invested by this elasticity with a moral ubiquity. In the huts of the savage, and in the bosom of the wilderness, she is as royally entire as when enthroned in halls of learning, in temples of marble, or in the high places of the commonwealth.

The Church the supreme power.

Hence, whether we view the Church in its immediate dependence on Christ, in the moral properties which it exhibits, or in the agencies which it develops, we cannot but regard it as incomparably the highest power on earth. Both its objects and resources lie quite out of the province of secular life —superadded to the sphere of human things by the grace of Heaven—and as little to be superseded as created by the progress of social development. This, however advanced, never trenches upon the province of the Church, but rather makes its business all the more urgent, since it is only in the utmost trial of human power and wisdom that the completeness of their failure to elevate our nature becomes apparent. From age to age, and from one end of heaven to the other, this truth has been proclaimed as the one great oracle of the world's history: nor is it to be believed that this history will, in future, be more than the echo of the past, until the homage due to Christianity—reluctant and late deferred though it be—shall be freely accorded by the heart of the world, hitherto unanimous in disowning need, and in disdaining aid.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST—

His Remedial Institute.

Remedial prerogatives belong to Christ as Head of the Church. Here we approach a subject of equal interest and difficulty. If in John's vision 'no man in heaven, or in earth, was able to open the book, and look upon it,' till the Lamb prevailed to take and to open it, can it be a marvel that even now, while this great roll is unfolding, its contents can hardly be read by this our lower light, and that our gleanings are, in many cases, only guesses? It is to be owned, that in the administration of his kingdom hitherto, we see little that accords with its early promise, and as little that accords with either our impulses or our prognostics, when interpreting its genius and its auspices. There are, however, a few salient points for observation.

The universality of the Gospel.

1. It is indubitable that Christianity is designedly and avowedly an *universal* religion: the Gospel is ordained to be preached 'to every creature.' The mandate for its diffusion is as plain as words can make it, and it is illustrated both by the structure of the system to be propagated, and the example of those who first received and transmitted it. It is an objection of no consequence, that, literally, the

Gospel could not, without a series of miracles, have been propagated at once, 'to every creature.' The 'every creature' could not mean directly every human being on the face of the earth, but only the representatives of the great human family—the Jew and the Gentile—or such sections of them as were immediately accessible. But while the terms in this connection mean but this, they comprise also *universal man* in the most literal sense, since there were no human creatures lying *without* this twofold division. Hence, the *prospective* nature of the ordinance is as clear as its terms are definite. It was designed for all time, and for the whole Church; and was meant to be carried out till its utmost import should be substantiated in an universal evangelization.

The Church the instrument of its propagation.

2. It is also implied in such a mandate as this, that the religion to be propagated contained in itself provisions adequate to this great upshot; and that the mind of the Church was to be devoted to it, without halting for ulterior measures on the part of Heaven. For, it is the *Gospel* that is to be preached 'to every creature'—a word, assuredly, well comprehended by them who were required to wield it: they were no more required to wait for instructions than they were indulged with a release from duty. The word 'Go,' was just as truly a beginning motion in this highest sphere, as it would have been to a planet launched into space by the word of the Omnipotent, and endowed with perpetual motion.

The Church never extinct.

It is implied also, that as *universality* was designed, so no absolute failure was possible in the application of the means. If there must be a maxi-

mum, there must also be a minimum. Alternation there might be: ebb and flow, wax and wane, advance and decline; but no *cessation*. 'The bruised reed' is never broken; the 'smoking flax' is never 'quenched, till he send forth judgment unto victory.'[1] The whole Bible history from Genesis downward—the entire testimony of prophecy from Isaiah to Revelation—its institutions, devotions, allusions, prognostics—all show the indefectibility of the 'holy seed' in the earth when most corrupt before God. Its scarcity may surprise us, but still adds interest to the phenomenon, as did the boundless desolation over which the ark was borne—the sign of the covenant between God and the human residue within. *There* not only floated the world, but the Church of the future—the children of the flesh, and the heirs of the promises. Why was the evil not suffered to absorb the last representatives of 'the sons of God?' Why, if there were *one*, should there not have been *many?* Why, if *one*, should there have been *any?*

In the call of Abraham, also, we trace the course of the holy seed, and the train of measures for its preservation and diffusion. And again, in the history of Moses and his people, we see another epoch of preservation and increase. Whenever these steps of God are seen, a sign is given that in the world at large evil is on the *rise*, that godliness is on the *wane*, and that new antagonisms are needed against the accumulating pressure of the powers of darkness. Something must be held, even in extremity: the field is not to be abandoned, though righteousness might sanction this. The grace that

[1] Isa. xlii. 3.

redeemed the world must not be vanquished in the struggle for world-dominion, nor defrauded of its revenue of praise. Downward, from the earliest to the latest times, the conflict is drawn out between light and darkness; but the triumph of the latter is never complete. Though truth is never enthroned, error never holds undisputed sway. 'Seven thousand men' are reserved by God in the evil days of Elijah; and in his own day, St Paul tells us, there was 'a remnant according to the election of grace.'

Its preservation a matter of divine decree.

Mere *residuary* Christianity is the one fact of church history during many centuries, compared both with the outlying world not yet reached, and with its own domain, almost equally devoid of its spirit and virtue. Reading this great fact historically, and in a Bible light, God must needs be seen in such an issue as this. Whatever of contingency he may have interwoven with the course of human things—whatever force he may have permitted to the workings of evil, or of defectibility to the force of good—something he has decreed and made absolutely sure. To whatever point of circumscription and extremity the cause of truth may have been reduced, it were impossible that it should be annulled,—driven out of the world,—chased, till it should take wing finally, or even for a time, into other climes. The habitation of 'the truth' has rested as firmly as the earth's foundations or the heaven's span upon the 'same word.' God has ever dwelt within that shrine; and no hand of wickedness might rend its veil. Within this slender tabernacle God is enthroned, and the fire from his presence is ready to consume the intruder, ere he

touches its holy threshold. The place of his feet is to him more glorious than the world beside; and a handful of his worshippers are as the apple of his eye: 'Nevertheless, I wrought for my name's sake.'[1]

What principles offer the best solution of this phenomenon?

Absolute predestination out of harmony with Scripture.

(1.) There is the strict predestinarian hypothesis, which makes all events in time the issues of decrees dateless in the past of eternity. These give birth to all agencies, whether good or evil, and take effect in seasons and methods, all the exact transcripts of the archetypal will. By this doctrine, not only are the properties and positions of moral agents ignored, or considered as in semblance only, but the perfections of Deity are obscured, in order to exalt his *will* unduly. Speculatively, this tends to Pantheism; practically, to Fatalism. Cause and effect stand *identically related* in the moral and physical systems, if *one will only* be allowed; and the destiny of a man, and of an atom, is made to hinge on the same principle.

Apply this doctrine to the condition of the world as it is, and ever has been: then, it could not have been other than it is. The operation and counter-operation of all the agencies existing in it from the beginning until now, are not only truly, but *necessarily*, exhibited in this result. It shows the divine programme of the world exactly carried out: no *more* good could have been done; no *less* evil could have come to pass. One will has originated the necessity which has given birth to all kinds of agencies, and to the complexions of all events.

[1] Ezekiel xx. 22.

Nor can it be made to appear, on this hypothesis, what is the radical distinction between good and evil, or what the ground of our Lord's own prayer, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

Whatever aids may be sought in favour of this doctrine from systems of metaphysics, or however logical subtlety may attempt to hide its true bearings on the nature of moral government as a transcript of its Author, or as a law to its subjects, it is utterly out of harmony with the structure of the Bible, supposed to contain it, and equally out of harmony with the conscience and experience of men; while, if applied to the solution of the point before us, the inferences which it suggests are as injurious to the divine character as they are to human duty and happiness.

Human action not the result of the divine Will alone.

(2.) We may apply to the case before us the counter-theory; namely, that which, though not denying predestination, does not refer the course of human agency and events to the divine will *alone:* this theory qualifies the aspects of predestination, by making it the result of God's foreknowledge in relation to the powers and acts of moral beings: thus, pre-ordination is the act of the divine will giving effect to purposes or counsels which cannot but reflect all the attributes of an infinitely perfect nature, not a part only.

This theory admits what is called contingency into the province of divine rule, as correlative to what is properly called Will in man. On this theory, no one course of human events may be pronounced *necessary*, or inevitably determined, without possibility of an alternative, nay, even of a succession of events widely different: given that

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the moral and physical elements of human nature are what they are, and its exterior relations also predetermined, scope is left for certain issues—all *foreseen*, it is true, but only *conditionally* determined.

Accordingly, all the possibilities of things being opened to the Omniscient, and open to him as the Supreme Ruler, he is supposed *to will* what actually comes to pass; and in different senses or degrees, to employ all agents as his instruments to bring them to pass. On this all-comprising view of things, and knowing his own designs, he is supposed to will all agencies whatsoever as standing in relation to their accomplishment.

Human freedom not removed from divine control.

This theory leaves the freedom of moral beings entire, and their responsibility unaffected: they are not reduced to the condition of automatons, but yet they are so circumscribed and conditionalized by the divine arrangements around them, as to be just as little removed from the divine control as they are from the divine presence. They all work in conformity with their own natures, and the truth of their own consciousness: they are free to form their own projects, and to choose their own measures; yet they are still kept in hand by the supreme Will, and are in fact just as truly means to its ends, as if all were moved by divine impulse.

Mediation harmonizes free-will and free grace.

To apply this theory to the subject before us, it is supposed, that all the possible courses and issues of the world under mediation being open to God, he has adopted that which we see obtains, as *on the whole* the best—most for his own glory—most for the good of his creatures—most for the honour of

the Mediator himself. This theory supposes that moral liberty, ensured by 'the free gift,' as an offset against moral corruption, is empowered to choose or refuse the good and evil presented to it; that man's condition is essentially *probationary;* and that the past and present of the remedial economy represent these two principles, free grace and free-will, in undisturbed operation. In consequence, evil, though unnecessitated, has still been predominant: good, though divine, an underling in the world. Another, and very different result of these principles in contact, was, indeed, possible; but God has not interfered, and by such non-interference has shown that he had willed things otherwise. He has simply endorsed *the fact as it is*, as His Will, and tendered it to our acceptance as His decree.

A special as well as a general law of grace.

(3.) There is a possible middle theory still open to us, if to some it may appear that those already suggested, as antipodes to each other, miss the golden mean. The one seems to assign everything to God—nothing to the creature; the other too much to the creature—too little to God. The one may seem to exalt sovereignty to the destruction of the subject—the other, the subject to the derogation of prerogative. The one may seem to exalt grace at the expense of justice—the other, justice at the expense of grace. Is there then a middle path? If there be, it must involve a participation of these schemes in some degree; that is, there must be something absolute—something conditional—something that *must* be—something that *may or may not be;*—in other words, there must be *interposition* as well as established, normal action. There must be a *special* added to a *general* law of

grace—rule, and over-rule—that working which exists everywhere and always, and that which marks particular eras or persons. Sovereignty does not always act up to its very maximum; it has its *scale* of operations, and also its *reserves*.

In adopting the distinction between interposition and normal action, as included in the same system of restorative grace, what do we more than trace into the inner moral world the workings of the same principles that govern the outer world, as exhibited in the light of Scripture, and to the most comprehensive observation? God is nearer and more manifest in some ages and events of the world than in some others, and in the endowments and enterprises of some few persons than in millions of others.

Revelation an example.

What, too, we may ask, is the basis of Revelation itself but interposition; and its material, but the history of that interposition springing from the depths of sovereign grace? It has no obvious foundation in nature, or the reasons of things; or in the relations necessarily existing between God and his creatures: it is something *special, and superadded to these*—exegetic and perfecting, but by no means identical, or inseparable from them. Revelation is God's practical assertion of his right to interfere in the moral system which he has instituted over men from the beginning, and to adapt it to man's weal in the progress of his history, and for the display of his own glory. Mediation being assumed as its basis, the measures proper to work it out become the staple of divine interposition, extending, in a connected series, from the beginning to the end of human history.

Interposition presupposes mediatorial grace.

The existence and the condition of man rest upon this original fiat of grace: they are concurrent with it throughout; they are interpreted by it, and are, as it were, prophetic of its action and results. Thus, the acts of interposition, throughout, assume *the existence of the lower and general rule of grace;* they arise out of it, and confirm, rather than preclude it altogether; though, in these instances, effects are produced beyond its ordinary or normal power.

In truth, there is a sovereignty of grace, which, while ranging as broadly as the race, and as unsearchably as Christ, is also one of *distinguishing* favour to peoples and persons. Throughout the Bible, we see this sovereignty of grace coming in upon the world in its own time and way; not awaiting human solicitation, or human bidding. It does not find its instruments; it makes them: nor does it frame its measures by what the world wishes, but by what the world needs. This sovereignty is entirely *elective*, but without a *reprobative* counterpart, at least in the damnatory sense; accumulating *favours*, but never denying *mercy*. Like the sun, it has its tabernacle, and its favoured lands; shining with universal, but by no means *equal* ray. The absolute and the contingent, the resistless and the measured, the prevenient and the consequent, the general and the phenomenal, are but *modes* of sovereign sway resolvable into no laws of procedure made known unto men. They are administrative mysteries, in consonance with the Record, and intimated by it; yet transcending, as in the case of prophecy, man's power of comprehending them.

Grace universal, not equal.

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When St Paul, quoting the words of God to Moses, 'I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy,'[1] appends to this edict of sovereign grace his own inspired counterpart, 'whom he will he hardeneth;'[2] he opens to us the entire compass of that sovereignty which presides over the economy of redemption, and the destinies of the world. The aspects of this sovereignty are here declared to be twofold—gracious, and judicial: aspects these, truly, which are more conspicuous in relation to the more privileged portions of mankind, but which also appertain to it in the world-wide extent of its administration. Altogether, it exemplifies the wisdom of the sacred muse: 'I will sing of mercy, and of judgment.'[3]

Dispensational progression.

Glancing at the history of the divine dispensations as based on Mediation, we are struck both with their *progressive*, and their *partial* character. Everything in their career is marked by incipiency and leisureliness—as it were, by the characteristics of experiments to be thoroughly carried out; not *forestalled* by any supposed ulterior resources, or, humanly speaking, helped out by measures of expediency. The truth, or dispensation of truth, is, for a while, to hold the field of experiment alone; it has its allotted space both of territory and time not to be curtailed or traversed by any other. The ordinance which ushered it into supremacy has given it the sceptre of many centuries, and withdraws it, when, in 'the fulness of time,' it has ripened the world for something better. Thus, *interposition* wrought in ordering the succession of dispensational arrangement which issued

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 19. [2] Rom. ix. 15. [3] Psalm lxxxix.

in a perfect system of religion predestined for the world.

We see also *partiality* as well as progression in this administration; for, instead of a simultaneous and co-extensive operation on the whole race, it is restricted to a few, as in the instances of the patriarchs; or to a single nation, comparatively insignificant, as were the Jews. This, in fact, seems to have been the widest stride of elective goodness; for, though the world is the object aimed at by the elective grace of the Gospel, it does not recognise the principle of race or national predilection at all. On the contrary, the Gospel set out by discarding it: reprobating the *nation* to elect the *individual*, it broke down the prescriptions of descent to inaugurate the era and the people of *Faith*.

The gospel calling individual, not national.

On the surface, this looks like retrogression, though in reality a principle of advance. The 'election of grace' was far more catholic than that which it supplanted; but far more restrictive in reality, since it rested on a *spiritual* instead of a *national* basis: so that, while this election made the Church, so to speak, a conglomerate, it tended to isolate it from the surrounding world. Gentile calling as such, in contrast to that of the Jew, remains just what it was when the apostles left the world. Territorially, it has been vastly extended. At the close of eighteen centuries, its domain is nominally imposing, and, no doubt, rapidly widening; but, spiritually, the dispensation has been hitherto confined within narrow limits; and, as it would seem, the sovereignty of *interposition*, which gave it a beginning, has been engaged in maintaining it to this day.

The Church perpetuated by divine interposition;

Interposition is traceable in the preservation of a holy seed during the intervening centuries from the birthday of the Church till now: in the raising up of witnesses here and there to apostolic truth; in the evangelic movements that have occurred at intervals, in various lands, bringing about reformations, and the wider spread of christian truth. It is traceable in remarkable effusions of the Holy Spirit, and in the production of sudden and vast ingatherings of spiritual people after ages of darkness and death; the effect of which has been to widen the basis of christian operation, and to give to truth and moral influence a stronger grasp on communities and nations. These events have ever shown the hand of God as truly as in the outset of the Gospel. The rise and fall of spiritual religion in the world have always exhibited the same characteristics; the same doctrines embraced or forsaken; the same operations of grace going on or suspended; the same instrumentalities plied or abandoned; the same virtues exhibited amidst opposition and scorn; and the same enterprises conducted with self-sacrifice to triumph, or exchanged for inanimate forms, rampant worldliness, or withering superstition.

Looking at the facts as they are, it seems that SOVEREIGNTY more or less marked, must be pledged to effectuate as well as to originate the dispensation of grace. Its history establishes this truth unequivocally. But the same history equally evinces the doctrine of *non-interposition* as the counterpart of the same economy. We are as surely taught the nature of this economy by what God has left undone, as by what he has done. *Interposition* has brought down to us the dispensation which it

originated, by virtue of a series of operations which has kept Christianity a living fact before the world, though till now 'lying in wickedness.' We are indebted to interposition for conversions and revivals; for redintegration, diffusion, and vitality, at least very mainly.

apostate when interposition is withdrawn.

With *non-interposition*, we associate, in various degrees, corruption and apostasy—the eras of darkness and death, when the Church was no longer the witness for 'the truth,' nor deserved its name: when it was, indeed, wide-spread and dominant, but worldly and tyrannical; imperial, but an adulteress; decked with jewels, but drunk with blood; steeped in abominations, and an incubus on the earth. Piety there was, though rare; not embodied, but individual—not recognised, but in secret—a latent element—a smouldering fire—a seed scarcely germinant, though not dead. On the surface and the mass, all seemed ruin and desolation, deformity, anomaly: the name of Christian only left—its significance, its divinity, gone. We trace this non-interposing sovereignty in a cold formality of the Church while subsisting under better forms; in truth embodied in confessions, not in hearts; and in creeds professed, but practically given up,—in an insincerity which the votaries of superstition by their earnestness condemn; in the neglect of ordinances which awakens no remorse; and in the service of mammon which spurns disguise.

Again, looking at these two great constituent principles at work in the dispensation, we see not more clearly how they regulate, than how their separation would practically recast it. By their

force, we account for things as they are, not as they might be. While sovereignty secures certain results, contingency does not preclude them. The world, on this showing, might have been either better or worse than it is; but the world must needs be the repository of 'the truth' and its offices, so long as it exists. The platform cannot be taken down; the kingdom as an earthly administration 'cannot be moved,' let the subjects and the state of the kingdom be what they may. In this sense, *sovereignty* is the sheet anchor of the Church.

Contingency not precluded by divine sovereignty.

Let us test hypothetically the rendering of these two principles in the working of the remedial system. It is obvious that sovereignty from the beginning, might have maintained a far more uniformly high bearing than it actually has done. The day of Pentecost might, for aught we see, have lasted until now, or until it had destroyed 'the works of the devil.' Why not? If *merely saving results were contemplated*, would not this have been the fact? If the human mind could be thus powerfully applianced, so that its moral nature, though not overborne, could be effectually won, why should not this same prerogative of grace be ever active, and 'a short work' be made by the Lord upon the earth? For whatever reasons it has pleased God to stop short of this, the fact is undeniable, and the doctrine involved in it equally so: he has not adopted *sovereignty alone in this sense as his rule of action.* This must have overborne *contingency*, or rather precluded it; as, on the contrary, that of contingency must have precluded sovereignty. *Each taken alone*, is inconsistent with the actual course of events. Contin-

gency implies, that while sufficient help is tendered, and a sufficient rule given, the human will be recognised as the sovereign, but responsible power ruling human action.

Responsibility proportioned to grace.

Nor is this lower view of man's moral condition and responsibility under the economy of grace inconsistent with the strongest view of sovereignty, since it is but the same remedial goodness variously applied, in harmony with the parable of the talents, and the obvious course of Providence. *Degrees* of grace are not only in accordance with the notion of its sovereignty, but with the ordinances which rule human life at all points. Degrees of grace are all degrees of favour, the highest, undoubtedly, proportionately tending to secure the object beyond the lowest; yet are both consistent with divine equity, because accompanied with commensurate responsibility, while neither of them precludes a *probationary* condition: 'to whom much is given, of him there shall be much required.'[1]

Taking, then, these two principles,—sovereignty and contingency as consistently co-operative in the economy of grace,—no good reasons appear for fastening upon either apart from its fellow, the extreme and repugnant doctrines which polemical theologians have deemed their just corollaries. No damage, on the one hand, is done by them to the freeness of grace; nor, on the other, to the requirements of equity. Sovereignty is not abated of its most glorious prerogative, 'I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy;' nor can 'the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?' Human duty and probation remain intact

[1] Luke xii. 48.

throughout the entire compass of the dispensation. God, as a gracious and equitable sovereign, 'reaps not where he has not sown, nor gathers where he has not strawed.'

Man may counterwork God.

Looking for a moment at the operation of what, for distinction's sake, we have called contingency as removed from sovereignty; or, more properly, at sovereignty on its *passive* side; it is plain that its admission as a co-ordinate principle in the dispensation of grace, implied the preterition or exclusion of large sections of the race from its privileges, at least for a season, notwithstanding the breadth of the ordinance requiring that the Gospel should be preached 'to every creature.' The human instruments were not preserved from default; nor was the blessing so redundant as to carry out the commission conformably with its tenor, everywhere, and at once. Sovereignty *alone* could have done this. Scope was allowed to human infirmity and unfaithfulness, as well as to Satanic counterworking—things which might have been, but were not overborne.

It seems to be a measure of Heaven's wisdom, to bestow gifts, but to leave the uses of them to men: in plain words, to allow them to abuse or neglect them if they will. This law has never been more than temporarily and partially suspended; perhaps it never will. The gifts themselves are left to work their own way, subject to *occasional interposition only*, as being *on the whole*, a preferable course to that which mere sovereignty might prescribe.

Hence, though it might have been otherwise, we have at this day a Christianity both partially corrupt, and partially propagated—a vast deprivation,

Partial Christianity not inconsistent with general grace

no doubt, to the world, even in its social and temporal aspects, but incalculably more to the souls of millions, who under other auspices might have been partakers of its highest blessings. To these sections of the race, there is, practically, no 'election of grace,' or *covenant* status: but this implies no *collective or personal reprobation*, except *quoad hoc*, any more than by the expression, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,' we understand that these twin brothers were *personally* the objects of divine favour or displacency; or that even their *posterity* stood collectively in similar conditions of favour or disfavour with their Maker. The argument, as well as the common sense of the passage as it stands in the prophet and the apostle, show that these expressions apply to covenant or non-covenant relations between them and their Maker; and that they have no reference whatever to personal favour or reprobation.

Such preterition, therefore, though it be in some respects a mystery, is in no wise inconsistent with the sovereignty of grace in the most extended sense. Though this be its less benignant phase, still it is possible that this may be more a surface anomaly than a real one; and that a deeper and broader view of the course of the dispensation may satisfy us that there is an important truth in the poet's adage, 'Whatever is, is best.'

Judicial equity inseparable from the economy of grace.

One most momentous feature at least of the dispensation of grace is made conspicuous by this twofold range of its sovereignty: this is the *judicial*. It is not devised and carried on with the view of excluding this alternative, as would be the case, were its operations in their most sovereign forms—

either on the smallest or the widest scale—based on the passively-subject character of the moral nature of man. A grace which practically annihilates the human will may act in consonancy with *mere goodness*, but it leaves no field whatever for the operation of *justice:* this is altogether precluded by a regime of mere favour. But such a regime is hardly to be denominated a moral one; and if it could be shown to exist, would be *sui generis*, and inexplicable, if not *absolutely contrary* to the doctrines of reason and experience. It is therefore, *prima facie*, an inadmissible theory which brings out *one side* of the divine character only, however attractive, and which sets aside one-half of the declarations of Scripture to the effect, that '*righteousness and judgment* are the habitation of his throne.'

Indeed, though justice be the antithesis of grace, it is never separated from it, either in the history of the Mediator, or in that of his administration. So far from this being the case with respect to the latter, the dominion of justice is vastly enlarged in the world by the introduction of the restorative economy, both as to the *compass* of its rule, and the force of its sanctions. Its voice is ever uplifted in combination with the most beneficent words of grace, 'He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.'[1]

Nor do we find that the most favoured subjects of 'the election of grace' considered themselves, or others of 'the called of Christ Jesus,' as thereby placed in a status exempt from peril, or amenableness to justice. We read of prophets and evangelical messengers of the highest grades as 'sepa-

[1] Mark xvi. 16.

rated from the womb,' and sanctified from their birth to their exalted functions, as for example the Apostle Paul. Yet even these are not described as a privileged class so far that their ultimate salvation was made absolutely sure. Paul has left this express testimony concerning himself: 'I bring under my body, and keep it in subjection, lest having preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.'[1]

Judicial sovereignty of God.

When, therefore, this same apostle appends to his doctrine of electing grace, 'whom he will he hardeneth,' it is impossible to understand him as asserting, on the one hand, such a sovereignty of grace as contravened the teachings of his own history and office; or on the other, such a sovereignty of wrath as contravened the very notion of justice. We rather understand him as teaching, that while Almighty God is free as the Lord of grace to bestow his most signal favours on whomsoever He will, He is equally free to visit with his displeasure either nations or individuals at any point of their history, instead of making them the indiscriminate objects of his mercy. We understand him as teaching, that when there are different degrees of guiltiness, or even when these are equal, God may select a *portion* of the offenders for a display of his clemency, while he reserves the rest to be examples of punitive severity.

In short, God as a sovereign, though he must needs treat his creatures *equitably*, is not bound to treat them *equally*. He may determine to augment his favours, or to put them out of reach altogether, when his goodness even in its lowest mea-

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

sures, has been abused. At any point in the history of crime, he may turn upon the offenders the judicial side of his character, allowing and empowering them to sin on, converting every fresh act of rebellion into retribution by withdrawing either the circumstantial, or the moral obstacles to a course of sin; till finally, on 'the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,' the wrath cometh 'to the uttermost.'

This principle co-existent with the race.

The principle of moral retribution here laid down is one not merely co-existent with the highest form of the administration of grace, but with the human race. It is clearly traceable wherever the offices of grace have been brought to bear on men, from the apostolic age until now. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart became the type of the hardening of Paul's rebellious countrymen, as well as of the contemporaries of Moses and David; from which examples it is clear that judicial action goes on within the covenant as well as without it. In fact, it is within the realm of privilege that it is most marked,—in the power of conscience and of religious susceptibility of some, with the apathy which prevails in others: in the awakening, and re-awakening of individuals, which alternate with seasons of indifference and slumber going on for years, perhaps for life. These show a death of the moral man hardly to be galvanized into a momentary semblance of vitality, yet consistent with an external and conventional profession of what is called faith. In some, though but a few, this hardening is apparent in monster forms of blasphemy stalking over a christian land,—in the greater prevalence of secret or open infidelity—in a general spirit of worldliness and atheism—and in the scarcity and

feebleness of the spiritual life of an age or country. At such times, the *secondary* aspects of the divine sovereignty are most conspicuous.

The non-interpositional attitude of this sovereignty is also held over countries, and perhaps, centuries: 'the arm of the Lord' awakes not, while everything underneath consequently languishes, like a land under drought, and is sterile as a desert. Then, again, the same arm being made bare—all is life and motion: 'the wilderness and the solitary place are glad for them, and deserts' 'rejoice, and blossom as the rose.'

Dispensational order encyclic.

To end this discussion on the application of remedial measures by the Mediator; it is appropriate to notice the *encyclic* character of the dispensation. Most fitly may they be likened to the chariot which Ezekiel saw with wheels involved in wheels of vast compass, and 'full of eyes.' The *direction* of the whole mechanism is from the Throne and THE MAN upon it. Its moving force is the Spirit, and its appointed circuit, the round of the world.

But the *stages* of its journey are not to be augured by inspecting it; nor are the agencies thus comprehended by which it will make its way 'perfect.' This chariot *destroys* as well as creates, at each instant of its march. It grinds to powder whatever is opposed to its track, while the voices of the Cherubim wax louder and louder as it moves on. *Retrogression* is even a law of its progress; and alternate rest and motion are equally its normal conditions. First, the Gentile is abandoned for the Jew; and again, the Gentile is chosen, and the Jew becomes 'a castaway.' Finally, Gentile

gathering is conditional to Jewish restoration, and both combine for the redemption of the world. Sovereignty is seen not only in giving the Jew a prior calling to the Gentile, but in making that calling absolute, despite the long interval of his rejection and judicial obduracy. 'The gifts and calling of God,' are in this instance, 'without repentance;'[1] while, again, Gentile election is made not *contemporary* with, but *consequent* on this Jewish estrangement.

Whether this reprobative decree rested on the foresight of the early corruption of Christianity had it been consigned to the keeping of Jews only, or on their national peculiarities and position which might have formed a barrier to its progress outwards,—is perhaps not worth a discussion here; but that it did rest on some such practical issue, can hardly be doubted. As much is implied in these expressions: that 'the fall of them' was 'the reconciling of the world;'[2] and that, 'as concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes,'—that is, an immense benefit has accrued to the world by the temporary unchurching of the ancient Israel: 'the election of grace' has obtained a much freer scope for its operations than would otherwise have happened. In the interim, 'the fulness of the Gentiles' having been brought in, Israel is roused from the slumbers of ages—is re-covenanted, and made partaker of 'the root and fatness of his own olive-tree.'[3]

The summary of these encyclic movements given in the following passage, is as divine in wisdom as it is joyful in prospect: 'For as ye in time past

[1] Rom. xi. 29. [2] Rom. xi. 12, 28. [3] Rom. xi. 24, 31.

have not believed God, but have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; so now have these not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.'

Catholicity promoted by the elective principle.

Two statements are here made, of profound interest: the one, that dispensational catholicity is more effectually promoted by an *alternate and successional* operation of elective grace than by a principle which *excludes precedence and preterition.* Humanly speaking, the adhesion of the Jews nationally to Christianity would have seemed *indispensable* to its prosperity and dominion in the world at large. The children of the fathers, the heirs of the promises, and the people of the theocracy and of the Christ, must needs be made the members of the world-empire of Heaven; while *their* defection would have seemed to seal its failure, apart from perpetual miracle. This, indeed, seems to have been their own dream, as the warning voice of the Baptist testified: 'Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.'[1] Nor is anything clearer from the gospels, than that this warning would prove fruitless, and that Jewish apostasy was an event provided for. 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof.'[2]

The second doctrine of this passage is the *subserviency of judicial action* to the advancement of universal calling and election: 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy

[1] Matt. iii. 9. [2] Matt. xxi. 43.

upon all.'[1] Here a national and perpetuated conversion of Israel is declared to have been God's *purpose* in their abandonment for a season, and the certain issue of their future; showing a moral miracle to come without parallel, either in their own history, or that of the race. Prophetically, such an event may well be described as a resurrection, and its effects on the world, 'as life from the dead.'

[1] Rom. xi. 32.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Its Historical Characteristics.

To the church headship of Christ the notice of its actual developments properly succeeds. These, though incomplete, are the *historic vouchers* for his rule, and as characteristic, are replete with interest. The discussion presents itself under a twofold aspect bearing on the *outward*, and on the *inward* life of the Church. The former includes its condition as it respects the world; the latter its condition as it respects religion.

The gentile character of the early Church.

The first instance of prerogative to be noted in the outward life of the Church, is the thoroughly *gentile* character impressed on it by its Author, who thus prepared it for separation from the polity and fortunes of a particular people, and for rooting itself permanently and universally in the world. It is easy to perceive how profound a wisdom lay in the adoption of this one measure; for had the Jews *nationally* received the faith, it would, in all probability, have remained exclusively their heir-loom, and the world would have been almost shut out from the range of its benefits. The Church would have been merely *the old régime modified*—Jerusalem repaired and adorned—but not a 'New Jerusalem.'

The inevitable tendency of the Jewish origin of Christianity was *to restrict and injure it*, unless early disintegrated from these inveterate and all-plastic associations. Its corruption, there is every reason to believe, if not more entire than that exhibited in its gentile history, would have been *less accessible to remedy*, and far more disastrous, to mankind. From the fate of the law in the keeping of the Jews, there was little hope that the Gospel would have fared much better in *their* custody. Not only is the probability great, that it would have been more deeply corrupted, but that it would have been so entirely *nationalized* as to have been repugnant to the world; so that if a Popedom had arisen in Jerusalem, it would have been even more despotic than that of Rome, and far less congenial and ameliorative, owing to its national isolation and traditionary prestige. A Jewish Church, sustained by Jewish *nationality* must have been the *ruling* church of Christendom: its claims would have been paramount to those of all others: it would have been absolutely *unchallengeable*, and it would have impressed its own version of Christianity *indelibly* on the mind of the world. It would have been impossible to combat the doctrines or ordinances of this Church, since it would have been not merely self-contained, but *identical* with the very origin of Christianity. Judaism would have been pronounced to be the Gospel, and submission to this as its one living representative authority decreed as absolutely necessary to salvation.

Separation from Judaism necessary to catholicity.

If, then, a Popedom be an *inevitable development* of Christianity, separated from its *evangelical ele-*

ments (which the history of the Church seems to prove), it is plain that under Jewish conditions of existence, this would have been brought out into the most consummate features of tyranny and corruption: at any rate, the national enfranchisement of Christianity in such a form, would have been incompatible with the purposes and spirit of the religion itself. Instead of removing 'the middle wall' which kept the nations apart from the peculiarly privileged, it would have built it up higher than ever. There must have been more than 'one fold under one Shepherd;' more than 'one body' inhabited by the 'same Spirit;' and more than one Jerusalem, the seat of the divine Presence.

On this one measure, therefore—the *gentile* structure of the Church, which disenthralled Christianity from Judaism and its nationality—the entire future of the Church in the world, was made to devolve: its *outer* life was ruled by it, and its inner life also, so far as the one depends upon the other. This event was brought about, indeed, by the sin of the nation which had the option put before it of altering the whole aspect of its relation to the Church. But this sin was *overruled*, and its punishment also to the widest after-results in respect to the position of the Church toward the world. The Church became, henceforth, a *gentile* possession, and was entirely ridded of every feature which could form an impediment to the march of its world-destiny.

The race mission of Christianity.

A second example to be adduced of the all-provident rule of Christ over the Church, is but the counterpart of the first,—its *immediate intromission* into the Gentile world. Thus, effect was forth-

with given to its structural adaptation for its grand race mission. To mere human forethought, this would have seemed a hazardous expedient for the new religion, which, with its home broken up, and its foster influences withdrawn, sent it to encounter all the hate and apathy of the world. How could it be made to strike into so repugnant an element as Paganism, or to ally itself with all forms of existing civilisation, themselves the worst casts of human degradation, and the fruit of inveterate subjection to the darkest errors? Not only were its apostles unpatronized and unknown, its doctrines mysteries, and its leading facts repugnant; its origin and embassy as *Jewish*, were to Gentiles of every land, obnoxious; while its *objects* were as strange as its demands were uncompromising.

Christianity not only stood aloof from all existing forms of religion; it sought their overthrow. It was the plighted antagonist of the traditions, institutions, and habits of *all* nations, which, however various in their social aspects, exhibited but the symptoms of the one great apostasy. Its aim was to raise and mould the whole material of human society by one master operation on human nature itself. It was a kingdom outwardly, just as it was a kingdom inwardly; and its resources, as the regenerator of society and nations, were drawn from its power over individual minds.

Power necessary to its accomplishment.

Now, the grandeur of this purpose seemed to ensure its failure when tried on such a field as this. Therefore as the *conception* was divine, so was the *power* to give it effect divine also. In the absence of all intellectual and moral affinities between Christianity and the world,—or rather in the full occu-

pation of the world, with every species of antagonism,—how otherwise was even its *entry* to be effected, much more was a lodgment for it to be secured? Of political foresight and agencies, the Church was altogether devoid. Centuries must wear away, ere it could acquire anything like a name and a status in the world, or be entitled to rank in any sense as a *Power;* while its intermediate condition would furnish no augury of any such glory in store for it. Christianity had as little of political aspiration in its temper as of political destiny in its prospects. It was set on things for which the world finds no place, and which tend to separate from the world its most ardent disciples. So far from Christianity as a new religion, having in its outset a train of social and political causes operating in its favour, everything extraneous to it lay in an *inverted* position. Not only might room have been denied it in the world, but absolute proscription might have met it at every turn. Spurned by a people traditionally religious, the descendants of patriarchs, the children of prophets, and the expectants of heaven's promised gifts, in the advent of the Messiah,—its founder *crucified*, and its emissaries driven by persecution from their homes to seek asylums, as best they could; Christianity could hardly be regarded by foreigners as anything but a form of *Jewish fanaticism*, too pestilent to be endured, and too weak to bear the scrutiny of a public judgment.

What, then, was the *prestige* of the new faith, when thrust into its foreign field of enterprise? If it had failed to subdue its congeners, what were its prospects among aliens? If the preliminaries and

the training of centuries for Christianity had this upshot in the nation so favoured, how could it succeed where these divine antecedents were utterly wanting?

Tongues the augury of gentile conversion.

Yet was Christianity from the hour of its birth, a world-wide thing. Its 'cloven tongues' bewrayed its mission to other lands than Palestine. The men of its earliest baptism were, though Jews, men of 'strange speech.' The Gospel was not given in *their* vernacular, to be rendered by the interpreter into a score of languages suited to the hour: the opened fount of truth gushed through the channels of *gentile speech* into the ears of 'devout men from every nation under heaven,' and so proclaimed itself from the beginning—like the Jew, when eating the Passover with his staff in his hand—ready for its journey, and for achievements in the realms of Gentilism as its *promised land.*

'*The Acts*' are the sequel to this great archetypal event, the gift of tongues. Its records are mainly those of gentile essay and success. The great *missionary* whose conversion is therein related, appears as the champion of the movement. The earliest church disputes are chiefly those incidental to *gentile* operation, while the name imposed on the followers of Jesus for ever—a name not less honourable than oracular—was not imposed at *Jerusalem*, but at *Antioch*, as if to signify its *catholic import;* and, that by its lodgment in one of the greatest cities of the Gentiles, it had already substantiated its claim to be the religion of the world. The imperial woman driven into the wilderness, found there not merely a refuge from the dragon's wrath, but the elements of her rising sway, and

domains to become tributary to her future renown. Forgetting her own people and her father's house, her's was never to be the lot of barrenness or widowhood, but 'an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.'

Rise of the Church the proof of Christ's rule.

Now, these facts may be taken as decisive indications of Christ's rule *over*, and *for*, his Church. They imply divine foresight and control; they were measures of *anticipation* in the full survey of all events, and respected its welfare, whether immediately or remotely future. God's heritage might be transferred, but it could not be annihilated by the fortunes of Jews and Judaism. The days of the olden polity and of the temple were numbered, and a great religious crisis was at hand; but the Church was in no danger: like Lot, she was sent out of the midst of the overthrow. She had flown into a place provided for her, leaving behind her walls and bulwarks which were not the Lord's, but, like those of Sodom and Gomorrha, ripe for destruction.

This introduction and establishment of the Church amid peoples and realms so remote from, and alien to, the conditions of its origin, effected without any national movement or social appliances in its favour, but solely by the propagation of 'the Gospel,' is itself the greatest moral phenomenon in the history of mankind. Judaism was from the first, broached as a *national* system, and was set up in the world by the employment of *national resources*. Mahomedanism kindling its torch in the heart of the desert, flung it wide over the world, wrapping it in conflagration and ruin. Its emissaries were warriors; its prophets, generals; and its argument,

the sword. Fanaticism and lust were the springs of its enterprise, which, agreeably to the Apocalyptic image, was to mankind the sting of the scorpion, and issued in the enthronement of imposture and despotism through the desolated territories of the civilized world.

Missionary character of Christianity a mark of its divinity.

It is also remarkable that both Western and Oriental superstitions have been mostly *indigenous* in their rise, and limited in their sway, to races or nations bearing certain affinities to each other in their territorial positions, or in their political and historical developments. Religions may be *transported* from one country to another by conquest, commerce, or colonization; or they may be brought in on the rolling tide of the race as it has set in from its primitive centres, eastward, or westward; ever changing its wending course, till it retains as little of its primitive forms as of the race-tongue confounded at Babel. The propagation of a religion throughout the world by *mission merely, is peculiar to Christianity*, and it is a striking proof of its divine origin and destiny. The apostles were impelled to act in opposition to their strongest national sympathies by this principle, which transformed the most exclusive people on earth into the most catholic-minded of the human race; while it employed Judaism as it existed in the regions of Gentilism simply as a medium for the conveyance of its blessings to them who were 'afar off.'

This peculiarity arose out of the impulsive benevolence of Christianity, as well as from the supreme authority which invested it with *claims* to the ear of the world; and from the conviction,

which was paramount in its emissaries, that in propagating *their* faith they were obeying the will of Heaven. Hence, though the success which attended them is not of itself an argument in favour of the religion propagated, it is of the greatest weight when its *nature* is adverse to the general bent of humanity morally considered; and when the *means* employed to spread it were not such as human wisdom would have commended, or human policy have adopted as favouring its designs. On the contrary, they were decried as foolishness, and not less contrary to all precedents in human affairs than to the dictates of reason itself.

The unchangeableness of Christianity.

What could be truer than all this in reference to the propagation of Christianity? The Cross to make way in the world! The religion of ignominy and weakness to triumph over the gods and the glory of the nations! This idea, so remote from every human precedent and analogy, reveals its own origin, as does also its embodiment in a course of administration never to be wholly suspended: for though subject to great fluctuations, the fact of its not requiring to be superseded, much less amended in the lapse of centuries, has plainly unveiled the all-comprising sovereignty of the Head of the Church. From the first day of its existence until now, Christianity has stood before the world as an unchanged, and an *unchangeable*, thing. All human intermixtures, whether political or ecclesiastical, however skilfully combined and powerfully wielded, have failed to effect any *permanent modifications* of the system within which they have lodged themselves. Defecation as certainly ensues as corruption is infused, and a return to its divine

homogeneity is as inevitable an issue of its immutable elements, as is the returning purity of a fountain after pollution, by the action of its living springs.

Proofs of rule in the correlative action of the Church and the world.

In this view of the matter, the argument for the divine administration of the Church, is something more than a bare deduction from the facts of its history; it also rests not only on the character of the religion to be maintained, but on the mastery which this administration implies over the course of the world from one century to another, and over a breadth of people sufficiently great to bring out almost all the contingencies possible to the action of the race, and to the whole sphere of human influences. These influences, infinitely various and often disturbing to the Church, must have been *absolutely foreseen, and infallibly computed;* as must also the amount and the kinds of *antidote* to be provided; the intrinsic *moral* force inherent in Christianity to counteract opponent agencies; and the measure of its headway as opposed to, or aided by, the current of the world's life.

This is the doctrine implied, if not expressed, in the parables of the leaven and of the mustard seed: *growth* in the one instance, and *assimilation* in the other, are produced by appropriate laws. In the one instance, those of affinities existing between the seed, the soil, and the atmosphere, which together serve to develope the plant; and in the other, those between the meal and the leaven, which effect their conversion into bread. In both cases, a certain *aptitude* to the production of certain results belongs to the *natures* respectively brought together, pointing to their origin in the Supreme Intelligence

and Will. In both cases, a certain analogy is implied between the operations of nature and those of the 'kingdom of heaven;' or no teaching could be based on the examples adduced. In neither case, is the process chance; though it may be inscrutable to our understandings; nor are the results *contingent*, though vastly different in their nature and order of development.

No visible manifestation.

This truth is all the more forcible as it stands independent of the *miracles* by which Christianity was fully attested to the world; since, when these were withdrawn, no visible speciality remained to it, either as a system, or as an administration. Christianity seemed to be put by its Author on the common level of all human things, and to be left to make its way as if its origin and character involved no phenomena, and its failure or success, no grand issues of Providence to mankind. Outwardly it bore on it no badge of divinity, and no patent of empire. Its ordinance of propagation, 'he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,' was seconded by no thunders from heaven, and by no throes of the earth. It was authoritative, but quiet: a revelation to men of the mysteries of the soul and of the future state —of God, and of holiness, and of law and penalty. It was commissioned to speak to slumbering consciences with effect, and to tell men wrapt in darkness and corruption, of Christ's redemption, and of 'the acceptable year of the Lord.'

The grand phenomenon of Christianity was not so much its entire freedom from all traces of its Jewish antecedents, or its wondrous harmony with its catholic mission, as its power to make wide in-

roads on humanity so essentially disaffected to itself, and existing in conditions both social and religious, in the highest degree hostile to its spirit and design. But its power to subjugate the Jew was the earnest of its triumph over the Gentile also; and though no miracle can be greater than another (for miracle, in every case, implies the exertion of Omnipotence), yet was the *effect* in this instance, greatly heightened by what seems like a double miracle; first, in the creation out of Judaism itself of the agency necessary to *begin* the Gentile mission, and then, in crowning that mission with wide success. Here, both the means and the end, the resources and their application, were so remote from all human calculation, and so wonderfully sustained by the course of Providence that practical Christianity in its outset, as at this day, is a far greater phenomenon than were any or all *its miraculous concomitants;* making it, like its Author, its own witness.

The moral glory of the Church its standing evidence.

The *administration* of Christianity was then, and still is, its characteristic counterpart as the religion of the world, not only discovering its divinity in the absence of its primitive signs, but even making its administration the more impressive by a *cumulative* force, and its grandeur as arising from a purely moral testimony. Is not this great moral phenomenon of practical Christianity the true prognostic of prophecy? 'Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar, shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, and an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.'[1]

[1] Isa. lv. 13.

In this, as in a hundred other prophecies of a kindred kind, the mind of the Spirit is seen in depicting the *moral* glories of Christianity, without any reference to the *prodigies* that marked its introduction to the world; or, in short, to any thing beyond its operation in transforming men. *This* is its one wonder in the world, expanded through all lands and all time, and involving the proof of its origin and administration as equally divine. The Lord's 'name' is his moral glory reflected in human nature adorned by his grace; and his 'everlasting sign,' is his *work* in planting his Church within the desolate heritages of the earth, till 'the desert is seen to rejoice, and blossom as the rose.'

Adaptation of the Roman Empire to the spread of Christianity.

Moreover, the headship of Christ is evinced by the first great sphere of operation chosen for the Church—the Roman empire, then equivalent to the civilized world. It were no unwarrantable interpretation of the immediate intent of the great commission, 'Go ye into all the world,' which assigns its range to the Roman empire, within the bounds of which it has been almost exclusively confined until recent times. Nor can we assign any other meaning to the words of St Paul, that the Gospel is 'in all the world;' and, 'preached to every creature under heaven.'[1] For, of the creatures not overspread by this heaven, or of countries lying without this circle, what was known in apostolic times? Or what was the world, either geographically considered, or practically accessible, when continents were undiscovered?—when the extreme north and south portions of the globe were, by rea-

[1] Col. i. 6, 23.

son of distance—by seas, by forests, by the reign of solitude or barbarism, hermetically sealed?—when Britain itself was the 'Ultima Thule' to the enterprizing Romans; and 'the pillars of Hercules,' our modern Gibraltar—his extreme point of navigation westward? When even north-western Europe now the seat of Scandanavian or Sclavonic empire, was less known than the interior of Africa is now to us?—when Africa, except her northern coasts, was just as remote as America from the commerce and adventure of the ancients; and the remoter East, with its untold millions; its kingdoms, customs, and treasures—stretched far away beyond the outskirts of the more salient life of the race, and almost beyond the *world* of the Bible?

Well might that empire be regarded as the World of that day which comprised within its bosom the more advanced nations of early times—those nearest to the cradle of the race, as well as its younger offspring of the West—later in development but greener in strength. With the Italian peninsula as its seat and centre, the Roman empire stretched far away to every point of the compass, its radius including all the fairer portions of Western Asia—the territories occupied by the most famous monarchies of antiquity—the Assyrian, the Babylonian, and the Persian. It included the no less famous kingdoms of Egypt and Ethiopia, with the most illustrious of them all—'the glorious land.' It swept along the northern coasts of Africa, and the dominions of its once powerful rival Carthage, as far as the coasts that lie over against Spain. It enclosed the entire seaboard of the Mediterranean; and, rounding the Spanish peninsula, it followed the coast

lines of Gaul and Belgium as far as the Rhine; while our own Isle formed its detached outpost northward. Germany, at least its south-eastern portion, together with Gaul, formed its north-western frontier on the one hand, and the Caspian and the Caucausus its north-eastern frontier, on the other. Add to this, the lands of Hellas, Macedonia, and the isles of the adjacent archipelago, with Crete, Sicily, Malta, and all the minor isles of the Mediterranean.

An empire thus situated, was hardly less remarkable for its geographical site than for its magnitude. It comprised the fairest and most available portions of three great continents, and it brought together, in lasting bonds, the eastern and western worlds of men. It grouped together in the unity of empire the most diverse forms of humanity as to race and social conditions. Out of elements the most heterogeneous, it wielded a Power the most mighty the world had ever seen, and the most portentous on its destinies. Originating with a mere handful of adventurers, its rise from obscurity to its culminating grandeur, was a wonderful chapter in the history of Providence, an *augury* of some great crisis in the affairs of the world, and a mighty instrument for good or evil to the race. If framed with no special office distinguishing it from any of its predecessors, or of its successors: perhaps equally differing in its resources from both—yet was it singularly fitted to advance the interests of universal man.

Comprising within its ample bosom every variety of civilised and uncivilised man from the luxurious Asiatic, the polished Greek, the aborigines of Italy to the wild inmates of the German forests,

and the savages of Britain—its religions were as diverse as its provinces, and its manners as its peoples. The Roman empire contained a mass of elements, material, social, moral, political, and religious, upon which Christianity, if once fairly introduced, might be expected to operate on the grandest scale. It contained, in fact, all the more advanced civilisation of the world; its most powerful mind, its highest philosophy, its most perfect forms of language, and its truest doctrines of freedom and political science. Even the very rugged stateliness of that mind which had mastered the world and enthroned itself amid the palaces and temples of Rome, seemed by its attitude of unchallengeable sovereignty, to invoke 'the kingdom of heaven' as the only power in the universe to which it could tender fealty, and to be the only subject-power on earth in which it was meet for that kingdom to embody its high decrees, and, by this means, to transfuse its own spirit and mandates throughout the world.

Revelation always found in the great centres of Power.

The relation here assumed to exist between the Roman empire and Christianity, is remarkably verified in the antecedent history of the world. In all ages, the track of revelation and church institute, has been laid, either *hard by, or through, the great centres of political power.* It has never diverged into the *far off* territories of the globe, sparsely peopled, and isolated from the great living and moving body of its manhood. The career of the dispensations has always kept close to the *main pivots* on which the world has turned, as its story progressed, and as its plot thickened. No revelations and no churches have turned up to this day, in the

savage, stagnant, or isolated quarters of the globe, but only in the very *central regions* which have been assigned to the origin and historic development of man. Such was Egypt, the earliest seat of the national life of the chosen seed—a land as glorious in arts and in empire, as it was debased by religious aberration; and hoary in development, ere nations, now ranked amongst the most ancient in historic record, were born.

Why this strange fact, that Israel should be cradled on the banks of the Nile, and for centuries, nourished and enslaved by 'Leviathan, that crooked serpent?' Or why the *position* of Palestine itself, or the manner of its acquisition and settlement by the holy people? Or why the complexion of the national story—its glory and its shame—its astounding power in its palmy days, and its political insignificance in later ages? Why surrounded by the most powerful neighbours—conquering—and, in turn, conquered by them? Why was their influence felt in Nineveh, and Babylon; and their dispersion and captivities so extended and notorious, that they were sown among the nations for ages, more and more thickly, till their settlements were co-extensive with the territories of Gentilism—dotted over the inland and maritime portions of the then civilised world?

Furtherance of Christianity by Jewish settlements.

That process of national abrasion and wide deportation of the Jewish race, which, beginning with the Babylonish captivity, and continued through the ages of the Medo-Persian and Macedonian empires, down to the era of the subjection of Judea to the Roman sway, was not without its peculiar signifi-

cance as a work of Providence in preparing the world for the christian faith. The characteristic fecundity of the race, unchecked by political desolations, and so strikingly disproportionate to the extent of its territory,—its equally characteristic genius for competition and ascendancy in mercantile matters, together with its singular tenacity in holding to its customs and its faith,—rendered God's ancient people the grand pioneers of Christianity in that empire. Thus, not only were the lofty doctrines of Theism maintained at almost innumerable points within the realms of Gentilism, but the *elements* of the christian religion also, since Judaism was never perfect in itself, but merely an embodiment of promise, and a forerunner of 'the Light of the World.'

Nor can it fail to be observed, that the tendency of providential working towards christian ends, marks the *political subjection* of the Jew to Roman sway. By this means he became more thoroughly incorporated with the grand political system of that day, and mingled with the mass to be leavened by the religious influences of his nation. He became, as it were, a citizen of the world. He held a *Roman* status, and as such was protected in the free exercise of his religion and customs. The Jew, as in modern times, was not merely represented in the metropolis, and in great leading cities of the empire, whether east or west; he abounded in them. He not only maintained his religion, but spread it around him everywhere. The proselytes to his faith were numerous and influential, and the synagogue raised a platform for the superstructure of apostolic teaching, and became a centre of influence

to its message, which, in multitudes of instances, was wide and permanent.

Nor is it apparent how Christianity could, under other circumstances, have taken so strong a hold on the world as it did during the first century. Jews and Judaism formed the *vehicle* for its intromission simultaneously into the heart of the Roman empire. Thus was 'the way of the Lord prepared' by them 'in the wilderness:' the mountains were levelled, and the valleys uplifted, that all flesh might 'see the salvation of God.' Apart from these arrangements, Christianity might have been arrested in its outset, and have failed to make an *immediate impression* on the world. Particular missions, though apostolic, begun here and there, in nations wide and isolated, or even hostile to each other; unsupported by sympathy and fellowship, amidst persecutions and discouragements, might have languished and expired. Too far and feeble for effect, the world's eye might have been withdrawn from them altogether,—and a momentary wonder had been followed by apathy and forgetfulness,—had not so *many inroads been made at once into its leagued territories.* So many distant but united centres of action, formed within the bosom of a great empire, if they did not at once stir its very depths, showed enough of surface agitation to call attention to the exciting cause, and served to carry on a movement in favour of the Faith, strong in proportion to the weight of the mass in which it was embodied, and inexhaustible by the lapse of centuries.

The Roman empire, its antagonisms moral and religious.

The circumstances under which Christianity obtained its first purchase over the world, that is, by means of the phases, political and religious, of the

Roman empire, differed from any that preceded, or followed, in the history of the world. They show a much grander field of political unity, a far greater aggregate of intelligence and energy, and a far wider spread of preparatory religious influences on behalf of Christianity, than existed in any previous age of the race, or than in any that has followed it till comparatively recent times.

Thus, through the intercommunion of the Roman empire, the heart of the world became open to christian enterprise, in the apostolic age, by means not very dissimilar to those employed in our own. If the 'rod of iron,' wielded by that martial Power, then broke the nations 'in pieces' as a potter's vessel,' it also moulded the elements of a new political body, of a consistence favourable to the introduction of Christianity; as, in our day, the ascendancy of European states, particularly of our own country, has, conjointly with other and related causes, brought the remoter parts of the world into harmony with the purposes of the Church, and prepared the way for the most extended evangelic undertakings.

But in the primitive mission of the Gospel to the Gentiles, through the medium of the Roman empire, we have, together with a movement *within its territories, an antagonism to its corruptions.* It was at once put by its Author into a position suitable to the *exhibition of its genius, and to the accomplishment of one of its grandest moral achievements.* When the Gospel entered on the task of converting such an empire, though but nominally, to its sway, what was this but a bold onslaught on the whole of the then known world?

Nor did the world ever present so formidable a front to a moral adversary. With the most advanced civilization, and with a political sagacity unsurpassed, save by its military genius, the Roman empire combined all the intellectualisms of the Greeks and Orientals, and enshrined the treasures of philosophy in the utmost material magnificence; while its laws, institutions, literature, and arts, are a more enduring monument of its greatness than its conquests, and form the groundwork of modern civilization. The empire was in truth hardly more Roman than it was Greek: perhaps, more correctly, it was the mirror of the eastern and western mind variously combined and reflected, answerably to the iron and the clay mingled in the feet of the prophetic image.

Turning to its *moral and religious* condition, little that is redeeming or hopeful appears in the picture. The grossness of its polytheism was not retrieved by the various forms of philosophic atheism which prevailed among its more cultivated minds; nor the reign of a most revolting sensuality, by the subtleties of its ethical speculatists, or their feeble testimony in favour of virtue. The satirist of ancient days was just as puny a reformer as he is at present. The knout with which he belaboured vice so courageously, left no furrow on individual consciences. The retributions of public declamation against vice were not so much as a fraction exacted in the shape of an appraisement on indulgence. This was a sort of prescription which none scrupled to charter—an homage to virtue which cost nothing. Meanwhile on rushed the torrent of corruption, swelled by a thousand rills, as heedless of

these rebukes as if straws had been laid athwart its course, or as the march of nightfall in spite of the reclamations of the bewildered traveller.

Whatever may be the views of human perfectibility held in modern times, and under the *auspices of Christian light*, it is certain that the ancients held none such as to the prospects of human society: on the contrary, their opinions seem to have been, that it was in a *retrogressive* condition. They had their traditions of a *golden age;* but this was long past, leaving but distant and dim ideas of a return. All *their* views were *disparaging and despondent*, whatever their philosophy might divine, or whatever theories might be mooted as offsets to them. The tone of the most thoughtful and observant was pensive, if not disdainful. The world halted in its path of political and intellectual progress, as if sick at heart, and paralyzed by its very consciousness that its *weakness* was growing with its *power*, and that its physicians were of no value.

Nor were the *theogonies and religions* of the time at all in advance of its moral condition; since the one is, and ever must be, the reflex of the other. As systems of *belief*, to be tested by the ordinary canons of evidence, they were worthy only of ridicule and contempt, devoid of every attribute of rationality as they were of every feature of the primitive faith. But he knows little of the religious history of his race who applies to it criteria of this kind, or is ignorant how thoroughly the imagination and the passions can supplant the higher powers of humanity in the fabrication of religions, and enthral the mind of nations beyond the possibility of self-redemption, by the creation

of systems which man's reason can as little rival as it can destroy.

Among the ancients, but especially the Romans, the gods were rather a *political necessity* than the objects of individual devotion. Reflecting the genius of the Empire, they were more than associated with its fortunes—they were its patron powers. Rome was even more the palace of the gods than the habitation of men. The deities of the Quirinal, and the Capitol, there rested, as in the Acropolis of their strength, and as on the thrones of their glory, looking out to the circumference of the vast regions they had subjugated to their favourite people; thence sending forth their imperial eagles from time to time to the prey, with resistless swoop, and thence commanding their return, laden with spoils. The Romans, like the Athenians, as described by St Paul, were 'too superstitious,' or rather, excessively religious. Their State was based on the recognition of supreme powers, while its prestige was regarded as a proof of their reality, and the reward of their favour. Their institutions were throughout entwined with Religion. What we should call *the Church and State principle*, pervaded every function of government, and every department of the Commonwealth, whether civil or military; and though the Romans were too liberal or politic to interfere with the religious systems of the various associate peoples that made up the Empire, this practice probably arose more from the lofty sense of superiority they cherished on behalf of their own religion, than from respect to the customs of others.

This observation, perhaps, may be admitted to

Christianity temporarily tolerated.

explain why the introduction of Christianity was for a season unopposed, and why it was afterwards persecuted with so much virulence. At first, it might be allowed to pass as a *modification of Judaism*, and on grounds of common toleration; but when its essentially *antagonistic* character to the religion of the State was discovered, and its *aggressive* power in the march of its progress, it became an object of hate and dread. Then the contest began in earnest between the gods of the Empire and the religion of the Nazarene. We see the magistracy, the priesthood, and the people of the world's empire leagued in defence of the state gods, and against the movement for truth and holiness. We see before us David and his sling confronting Goliath with his mailed figure, his embossed shield, and his spear like a weaver's beam. Or, we hear the challenge of the same meek warrior to his royal persecutor: 'Is the King of Israel come out against a flea?' What and where is this foe that troubles the depths of that sea out of which the beast, 'exceeding dreadful,' was seen to arise in prophetic vision? What aileth thee? Yet is the depth of the anguish to be measured by the intensity of the rage. The arrow has flown, which, though slowly, drinks up its life-blood. The stone is in motion which is to strike down the image of iron and clay. The power is at work destined to change the face of this hoary, mountain-like structure, of a giant race, and to crumble it into dust.

As forces visibly embodied to contest with each other, there was not only no parity between Christianity and the antagonisms presented to it in the Roman empire; humanly speaking, there was not

a semblance or an augury of conflict. The one stood forth as the embodiment of all the human forces of the age; the other was simply representative of a power invisible, but divine. It had no origin, organization, or prestige, that could make it of the smallest account in the eyes of men, or that could lead them to augur its work and destiny. It had no embassage to courts, and no leverage on the masses. Without themes for the intellect, images for the fancy, or fuel for the passions, it seemed devoid of all properties to interest men, or to enkindle in them the enthusiasm necessary to combine them under difficulties, and to render them proof against temptations to desert it in the fray. It had no rewards to offer which men could appreciate; no doctrines which fell in with long cherished opinions, or rites which could readily assimilate with established symbols. It had neither temple nor territory to call its own; nor patrimony akin to that which the pretended successors of Apostles have laid claim to. The catacombs alone bear ample evidence to the state of the Church in the great capital centuries after it had gained some footing there; and are, doubtless, to be regarded as evidence of its depressed and perilous condition in the empire generally.

The persecutions of the Church.

The ten persecutions, as they are historically registered, were not irruptions of magisterial tyranny, or of popular frenzy, occurring now and then, allowing intervals of repose and favour: they were, like the outpourings of a volcano, the epochs when internal commotion attained its climax, and the laboratory of conflicting elements beneath the surface of society, was compelled to discharge its surplus

stores. In this case, the earthly and the heavenly as seen in Christianity and the Roman power, may be likened to the seen and the unseen in the system of Nature, the latter of which is incalculably greater than the former; since, though it is inaccessible to sense, it cannot be *measured* by what it has originated, but by what it is destined to destroy. In the unseen, Philosophy searches into the causes of things, not resting in the explicable; and in the very depths of Nature finds the storehouse of her destruction. The forces innate in Christianity, like those so subtilely pervading Nature, were, in the instance before us, as surprisingly marked by their *intensity* as by their diffusion: it seemed as if their essence was freedom, and that to resist this attribute by attempted counteraction, was just to ensure a more potent re-action. A *surcharge* by these means, invariably produced a *shock*—a shock, an overthrow—the vengeful self-assertion to be free.

The divine power of the administration of Christianity.

How individual life, stripped of every attribute of social and political importance, untouched by secular aspirations, and severed from all the great master instincts of association, could be so charged with the strongest elements of social regeneration, must for ever remain an enigma to all who fail to recognise, not merely the divine *origin* of Christianity, but the *divine power of its administration.* For it is most important to bear in mind, when such an issue is to be tried, that as the course of the Church emerges from *invisibility*, and the dawn of its existence brightens into day, the *times of its power are past. It becomes more and more a human and institutional thing.*

As Nature in its last development rather repre-

sents a power which has spent itself than one still in action—and it may be, also, the changes wrought upon it by the hand of time and of man—so in the later epochs of the Church within the Roman empire, we observe the stupendous workings of an *earlier power seen in their results, rather than the same action still continued.* Man is more apparent—God comparatively withdrawn. The Church lives on the past, and even in the breadth of her conquests and the splendour of her position, gives unequivocal proofs that her young life has been spent. The real vigour of her days is that of her obscurity and her suffering; she was mining the colossal power of paganism when burrowing in the catacombs,—not when rising out of the dust she arrayed herself in the imperial purple, and the empire was nominally her own.

Its early corruption.

From that time, the wonder of her achievements was at an end. Political power might aid in the demolition of pagan institutes, and in the erasure of the outstanding features of its social barbarism. Temples might be raised by public edict, estates confiscated to imperial or sacred uses, from the gods and priests of an obsolete religion. Idolatrous rites might be proscribed by law, and even the social customs, which lingered after their public deposition, be branded with imperial condemnation. Each halt of paganism in its retreat from power, as it turned itself to face again its conquering foe, might be the signal for fresh rout, and for heavier blows upon the tyrant's head, till the doom had overtaken it once inscribed on a pillar as that of its antagonist—*Christiano nomine deleto.*

The Cross might surmount, if it did not supplant, the Eagle, whether on the standards of the sol-

diery, or on the ornaments of the imperial person. Christian temples might rise on every hand, magnificent in structure, and enriched by private or by state endowments, till the new religion not only became a contrast to its former self, but outstripped the old one in social position. The advance of the Church in wealth had its corresponding advance in the scale of honours. The higher classes of its ministers rivalled in state importance, the greatest secular functionaries, and wielded powers far more august than those of their pagan predecessors. The Pontifex Maximus of old Rome was hardly a greater personage than its Bishop in the days of Constantine or Honorius. Even emperors assuming the headship of the Church in virtue of their position under the bygone régime, and of their unchallengeable supremacy in state matters, became not only the guardians of its discipline, but authorities for its doctrines, and arbiters in its controversies.

Along with these advances to wealth and power with their concomitant corruptions, there arose the spirit and the institutions of Monasticism, in strong contrast, and equal expanse; as if to verify on a vast scale, the scripture doctrine of the contesting principles of the flesh and the Spirit; and to offer a testimony to, and an atonement for, the wide-spread apostasy. But these are not the phases of Christianity which unfold its true genius and operation; they are rather humanized and degenerate forms of it, as the state of a nation offering only the dim reflex of other and brighter times, just sufficient to disclose and measure its downward course.

The revolution accomplished by Christianity.

In so far as Christianity failed to regenerate society throughout the Roman empire, this failure must be set down to its early corruption. It is not in place here to speculate on the question, how far its integrity might have corroborated, or its degeneracy have contributed, to the downfall of the Empire. But taking the facts as history gives them, the revolution effected by Christianity within that vast area of the world, in the belief, the worship, the morals, and the institutes of society, is something stupendous to contemplate, not merely as the crowning triumph of its early life, but the greatest moral phenomenon in the history of the world. It may, perhaps, be true, that other religions could be instanced as having in them a strong self-propagative power; as having been renewed by reforms, when their hold on nations had been loosening; or as having been disposted from their dominance by doctrines better suited to the changes which, at certain epochs, nations may be prepared to adopt, in preference to the abandonment of their fundamental beliefs. But no example comparable to this can be adduced, of systems brought into collision, so diametrically opposite to each other, in which the resisting force was so mighty, and the aggressive force so insignificant; in which the *modes* of warfare were so unwonted, and apparently so inadequate to effect their purpose; and in which the *results* were so great in their nature and extent—at once so pervading and so lasting.

If Christianity did not effect *all* that might have been expected from its spread throughout the Roman empire, yet this admission is in accordance with one of the doctrines of the old philosophy,

namely, that the Supreme Artificer purposing to frame a world out of pre-existing materials, was limited in the execution of it by the *properties* of these materials, which, to a certain extent, thwarted the ideal of his design. So, in forming a judgment of the operation of Christianity on this vast moral chaos, we are not to regard solely *the effects produced*, but the character of the material on which these were impressed. Of these, it is all but impossible for moderns to form a tolerable judgment—the world that then was being so unlike the world that now is, under the combined influences of centuries of christian light.

Could we, for a while, be carried back into the midst of this glorious old Roman State, and see things as they were, and not as they appear through the haze of centuries, or the fancy of the classic devotee,—what should we behold, but a colossal form of barbarism, without any of the softening influences of modern civilization? If it did not ignore justice altogether, yet the idea of it was imperfect, and the administration of it capricious, commonly venal; while *humanity and beneficence*, those great principles of social refinement, were things unheard of, save in the language of philosophers and the disputations of their schools. The doctrines of *popular* advancement and *popular* rights, if at all recognized, failed in their practical development through the lack of those *higher moral elements* in society which only religion can furnish. Ideal models of the Commonwealth made no way in the creation of a *public sentiment*, rendering the institutions and movements of society the reflections of itself. War was as inhuman and desolat-

ing in the days of the Cæsars, as in those of the rugged and struggling Commonwealth; and slavery held its sway just as unmitigably in the golden age of Augustus, as it did ere Carthage had fallen, or the nation had felt the influence of Greek manners and philosophy. In fact, civilization and slavery kept pace with each other, since both the extending sphere of Roman dominion, and the accumulation of Roman wealth supplied a growing stimulus to the vice, on the plain commercial rule of demand and supply.

As to morals, in the ordinary sense of the term, they could be hardly said to exist, where truth and integrity had ceased to be respected—where profligacy of every sort ran riot, and even unnatural crimes were perpetrated with public connivance, if not approval. The very ceremonies of religion, and the festivals of the nation, were scenes of shameless debauchery; and the recreations of the people consisted merely in theatrical performances—in those of the circus, or the horrible exhibitions of the Colosseum, where men destroyed one another for their sport, or wild beasts were introduced for the same purpose, or for the more dreadful purpose of killing and devouring men!

Such a condition of society as this showed the ripe fruit of human depravity, and what a monster man could become, when even his *natural virtues* were suppressed by his social combinations, and his vices by these means, stimulated to the highest pitch.

If ever society contained *within itself* any remedial powers, these were then plainly defunct; or had they even existed, the time for applying them

had passed by. The channels of corruption were not only filled, but deepened and widened by the flow of the current. The vast ocean of the Roman world seemed to exist only to generate mephitic vapours; these charged the clouds of its entire firmament, which, in return stored with increasing copiousness the spring-heads of its corruption, till they issued in a deluge of wickedness, destined either to submerge all, or by some interposition of Heaven to be speedily abated.

The conservative office of the Church.

The sign of this retrocession was the appearance of the Church, like the ark upon the waters, though, for a while, it touched only on certain superficies of this submerged world of crime. The swell of the billows had already begun to lessen, and the mountain summits, though telling of the dreadful underlying abyss, told also, like a plummet, that these depths were not *unfathomable*. The voice of the Gospel, as that of God, which, the Psalmist says, 'is on many waters,' caused them gradually to show the earth. The voice that uplifted *man* was the power that sank the tide of his social corruption, and gave presage, that in due time, it would make the earth not only habitable, but delightful. Could this be the result of any cause short of a moral omnipotence? or can it fail to be regarded as the grandest chapter of Providence in the history of the world, equally marked by intelligence and power, setting the seal of divinity on the Gospel, and affording us both an example of its efficiency, and an earnest of its final triumph?

Fall of the Empire necessary to the future of Christianity.

The Christianity of the Roman empire is also to be viewed in its relations to *the world's future*, and not merely, or chiefly, as an element in the Empire

itself. It is in this connection that we trace the most signal proofs of an all-informing rule on behalf of the Church. The first great phase of her mission to the world may be regarded as marked by *the downfall of the Empire;* the second, as taking *rise out of its ruins* in the *new nationalities* which gradually emerged out of them with the elements of that civilization which survived this great catastrophe.

Looking at this catastrophe, which in the Apocalypse is fitly described as the opening of a seal which overthrew the mountains, and overwhelmed society in confusion and terror,—we may liken it to one of those great geologic crises in which an existing state of the earth's crust is broken up and submerged together with all that grew or lived upon it, apparently destroying it for ever, but in reality, preparing a new and more perfect creation. All this collapse and desolation are, in fact, *fundamental* to a fresh and more noble habitât for life, to be superinduced in its appropriate forms, and at proper seasons. All that comes on afterwards, rests on this former world as its foundation; and, as it appears to us, is dependent on it as a precondition or cause. The former state of things lasted just as long as this ulterior purpose required, and then gave place to its consequent one; like the different scenes of a drama unfolded in succession.

It is probable that Christianity had done its work within the Roman empire, as such, and as fully as its social and moral conditions permitted; and that the downfall of that empire was as necessary as its

rise, in order to carry onward the *religion* as well as the *civilization* of the race.

In certain political and social states of the race *progress* is no longer possible. Empires as well as individuals have their youth and old age: their life cannot be renewed, but passes into death. In such cases, even Christianity cannot hinder this, because it is paralyzed and corrupted by its associations, and, to a great extent, fails in its office for society. Hence, to licence with immortality such a state of things would be to ensure a retrogressive condition of religion itself, by upholding the *bad social conditions* that surround it. Nothing, then, remains, but to suffer the social disintegration to take its course, and to induce the crisis. This is the necessary preliminary to *a new intermixture of races*, and to the formation of new political and social combinations. By this means religion is set free from the incubus of effete institutions and races, and is ready to blend with new and salient nations.

The process by which all nature is still kept alive and in motion, from a plant or an animal, to a man, rules the great movements which lead on the race from one stage of advancement to another: these are ensured in their due order, and with unerring reference to their ends. The march of Providence is thus as correctly indicated as that of *dispensational evolution* by apostolic testimony: 'Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.'

The pre-existence of the Roman empire was as necessary to the early development, as the dissolution of it subsequently, was to the ulterior mission of Christianity. Had the fortunes of the Church been

intrusted to one nation of insignificant proportions to the existing civilized world (as for example, was that of the Jews),—its very existence might have been involved in the continuance, and been jeapordized by the destruction of such a nation. The irruptions of barbarous peoples from time to time (such as enfeebled and finally broke up the Roman empire), might have trodden the Church into the dust, and obliterated its records and institutions from under heaven.

Action of Christianity on new nationalities.

But the same causes failed to operate to the same extent, on a wider field. The disintegration and ruin were more partial and gradual, giving time and scope for the influences of the declining civilization, and for religion to *react* upon the ascendant races as they were brought successively within its sphere. They were, in turn, subdued, and partially assimilated by the power they sought to destroy. Mingled with the blood of these young, though barbarous races, the progenitors of our modern Europe, the defunct empire might be said to live on in these representatives of her institutions, language, and literature, though under modifications which made these vastly dissimilar. Even Christianity, as we now see it, is little else than their entail of, either her latter corruptions, or her primitive catholic purity. *Rome* still exists, not merely as a relic of departed greatness, but as the ghost of a Power affecting world-wide sway, casting the spell of her name over nations with a force incalculably mightier than when, in her embodied state, she flourished in the zenith of her glory.

Without speculating, therefore, on the alternatives open to Omniscience for the furtherance

of the Church, we may take the testimony of history and of fact, that the Roman empire was the chosen vehicle for handing down to the present day, the precious treasure of the christian faith. It stands between us and the age and land of its birth, as the great foster-power ordained to receive, protect, and nourish it for modern Europe, and the latter times. Its vast domains both in the East and West, have, in spite of Mahomedan encroachment, and of the deplorable corruptions that disfigure both, remained sacred, at least, to the christian name. The history of the Church is for the most part, that of its fortunes within *this boundary:* all beyond, whether we regard the extension of the Greek Church in modern Russia, or that of Catholic and Protestant communities in America, is, as it were, but the addition of colonies to this empire, at once the redundancy of its life, and the reflections of its image.

The value of the evidence which this sketch of Christianity in connection with the Roman empire and its prospective influences, lies in the proof exhibited of the prescience of its Author in respect to the characters of those peoples into whom the empire was to be merged, and by whom it was destined to be represented in the nations of modern Europe. The Being who could foresee this, and adapt his measures to this basis, could have been no less than the *Creator and Disposer of these peoples to this very end*, and must be regarded as looking *beyond them* to the great ulterior purpose which he had in view, —namely, the perpetuation and ascendancy of his religion in the world.

These means, it was foreseen and ordained, should

more than *reproduce* the empire out of which they sprang. As the progenitors of the family of European nations they were to become the repositories of a far more advanced civilization, and of a far wider and better influence on the world than Rome ever exercised. Dark, deep, and dreadful as was the abyss which marked the middle ages of our epoch—forming, as it were, the grave of the world without augury of a resurrection—yet the wrecks of its former glory which seethed within the bosom of this chaos were to issue in a *modern* world, slowly evolved, indeed, but more permanent and progressive; which, peradventure, may answer to the grand *ultimatum* of the Redeemer's purposes, without the intervention of any future cataclysm to destroy and regenerate it. Over this tremendous gulph, not only has the ark of the Church rode in safety, but she has borne within her the treasures of the ancient past, making them the heritage of modern days. Could civilization itself have survived that dreadful crisis, had not *the Church* gathered up its relics, and stored them in her bosom? Or could a redemption from the deepest barbarism have been possible, but for the elements of recovery found in her institutions and influences, however corrupt and imperfect?

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Its world relations.

Relations of national life to the Church.

FROM the relations of the Roman empire to the Church, it is natural to glance at the relations of *national life* to the same object. Its *state-combination* was an early fact in its history, according with the universal national sentiment of the world as to the rightful supremacy of Religion, and brought about probably as much by conviction as policy. How far it is possible to incorporate into the State *as such*, a religion confessedly devoid of *all political characteristics* whether of origin or constitution—which for centuries, bore the brunt of state persecutions, and struggled successfully notwithstanding the most crushing forms of antagonism, into social ascendancy; and which, above all, is a *purely spiritual system*,—must be held a problem of difficult solution, and one still before the world. Of course, any project respecting the state-relations of the Church, beyond those arising out of its *moral* influences on society, can reach only to its mere *organizing and visible functions:* its unseen life and the sources of its moral power are things utterly beyond state cognizance and state control.

These considerations seem decisive against the

Establishment principle indefensible.

legitimacy of State Christianity, since it must ignore the very essence of the divine institute as *spiritual*, and must deal with it on the principles of Judaism, and even on those of a *human* religion, in which the *virtue* of the system is supposed to be contained in, and inseparable from, an *external* administration. Such a principle is essentially antichristian, just because it is unchristian. It legislates for 'the kingdom of heaven' as if it were a constituent or complement of a *form of polity;* while, in truth, it is something extraneous to, and therefore, independent of it. On the one hand, its necessary effect is to secularize Christianity; on the other, to render it unduly *prescriptive* even as to forms, as well as persecuting in spirit. But though we deem the *theory of Establishments*, for these and other reasons, inadmissible, we are far from thinking that in *working* it has been an unmixed evil. On the contrary, history offers abundant testimony to the fact, that if Establishments have been too frequently wielded against the truth, they have sometimes been wielded in its favour; and that, if in barbarous times, they have greatly aggravated the mischiefs of spiritual despotism, they have also in times of returning light aided the struggles of truth in securing for itself a sanctuary of peace and freedom.

The working of Establishments.

Never false in Creeds.

Nor is this the whole service which Establishments have rendered to the Church, through her various fortunes, especially since the days of the great Reformation. It is surely much, that in no examples that occur to us, have they embodied creeds *essentially false;* however far from being perfect exhibitions of the christian faith. Not only have the most ancient forms of belief been incor-

porated with modern articles and confessions, but these have been persistently adhered to for centuries. Practically, indeed, these have been often departed from, but never abjured: they have been held as recognized *standards* of doctrine, and have again and again been reclaimed from oblivion when ever the spirit of religion has revived.

They maintain a nominal faith.

It is much too, that they have held nations to the christian name and belief with their many reflex influences on society, which however feeble and inadequate, have prevented relapses either into Popery or Atheism. Traditional beliefs and the public symbols of religion are of incalculable value to nations, even in seasons when their power is practically lost. In asserting the service which Establishments have rendered to Christianity historically considered, the power of mere *prescription* over a nation should not be overlooked, since whatever may be the character of the thing prescribed, this power is second only to that intelligent and active adoption of a principle which constrains a people to uphold it, beating within them as the pulse of their common life. The spiritual life of a nation may ebb almost to extinction within a form of religion which it may have adopted; but it does not follow that this life has forsaken it, or that it is denied to a conjunction with that form because it has ceased to animate it in any corresponding force. The motions of human society, like those of the heavenly bodies, may be *cyclical;* or their states may resemble the phases of the seasons.

It may be true that no established form of Christianity ever did maintain itself in integrity, especially where internal freedom was proscribed, or

the formation of outstanding societies disallowed; but it is also true that these voluntary associations have commonly originated within the bosom of Establishments, and have drawn their birth-breath from them, though their life has been nourished and exercised in isolated positions.

Failure of the Reformation apart from state aid.

It is also incontestable that in no instance did the Reformation maintain itself when it failed to grasp the pillar of the State in its life-struggle with the foe. In the early stages of this great movement, the shield—if not the sword of the State—was an indispensable paladium to its existence; nor could this have been maintained without a miracle against the tremendous power both secular and ecclesiastical opposed to it, had this shield been denied. It is easy to point out particulars in which this or that theory may halt, or to assert for one or another which finds favour an absolute freedom from fault or weakness; but it is safer, and more rational, to subject them to the test of facts, and the light of history, since the evidence thence derived, whether for or against, lies in the direct course of Providence, and ought, therefore, to overrule, or, at least, to modify mere theoretic predelictions.

No service can endorse a principle.

But wherever the advantage may be held to lie when the historic testimony has been carefully weighed—or should we even grant the historic testimony in favour of Establishments to be tenfold more decisive than it is—it cannot thence be concluded that the establishment *principle* is of itself scriptural, much less that it is *indispensable* to the proper working of the church economy. Even granting that it was essential, not only to church working, but to church *existence* in certain crises of

her history; while we admire the Providence which made such use of the principle, we may still consistently decline to endorse it on *this ground:* much more may we decline the conclusion, that, because it has done for the Church good service, under certain circumstances, it is therefore of paramount and permanent *necessity.*

The anti-state origin of Christianity.

It is indubitable, that Christianity did begin its course, not merely without the establishment principle, but *against it* as it existed in Judaism; and that its season of youth, purity, and power, were passed in the same condition. Is it not, therefore, reasonable, even on the score of precedent, to draw the *contrary inference*—that these expedients however admirable, were only temporary—and that they may, and probably will pass away with the necessities that originated them, leaving to the Church, simply as such, her own great functions for society? Unfolding the sufficiency of her resources when unaided and free, she may compass far more than when subject to the influence of state alliances, which though overruled for great ends, become useless and pernicious as her mission is better understood, and her character restored to its primitive simplicity. Not then, as heretofore, will the Church be a parasite coiled about the forest tree, which taints its fruit and sickens its foliage the higher it mounts, and the faster it clasps the patron trunk. In her free and self-reliant state, she herself waxes into 'the tree of life,' 'whose leaf is for the healing of the nations,' to whose ample round of fruitful beauty they repair for shadow and for food.

The only church and state relation theoretically

The medieval Church supreme over the State.

consistent (though perverted by the despotism of a fictitious catholicism to the most selfish ends), was that in operation before the Reformation broke the yoke asunder. In the days of Medievalism, the State was not the ally of the Church on equal terms, but an *underling*, strong in her favour, subject to her discipline, and the minister of her behests. Such was the relation of the parties, when the Church disposed of kingdoms as her patrimony, and looked upon the mightiest potentates as her children and her vassals.

Protestantism, breaking off nations from this relation to a great central monarchy, and bestowing on them independence, gave the wrested sceptre to the STATE, which was thus falsely made to represent a *spiritual*, in addition to a secular power. This was a capital error; for, if it could not trust the Church in its national form with a *state independence*, it is plain that the alternative was to make religion *free*, and not to perpetuate under the new order of things what was part and parcel of a discarded system.

Church independence the true protestant theory.

But whenever Nonconformity is fully recognised, this anomaly is practically neutralized, and is made to harmonize with advanced sentiments, or what we must regard as the true theory. Still, the vice of the settlement, like a fault in the foundation or plan of a building, becomes more manifest by the nature and tendency of the *concessions* which the spirit of freedom has extorted from governments; while the denial of these has, in some instances, brought on national convulsions, or a condition of religious servitude degrading to the protestant name.

In truth, the very principle of Protestantism em-

braced by nations in severance from Rome, namely, that unity is *not* destroyed by separation from an unscriptural Communion—and that nations holding and acting on this judgment, may contain within themselves every scriptural constituent of the true Church—*cancels their right to enforce uniformity in religion.* By standing on such a ground, they are convicted of *breaking a more ancient and venerable law to this same effect*, while resting their vindication on the assumed inalienable *right of private judgment.* Hence, *free religion* seems to be the just corollary of the protestant principle, and every approach to its complete development is to be regarded as an approach to harmony between principle and practice.

Relations of the world to the Church.

The relations of *the world to the Church*, as indicative of Mediatorial rule, include notices of its action in the movements of society at large. These movements are on a vast scale, infinitely complicated, and running on in unbroken continuity from age to age.

The political supremacy of Christianity.

The *recession* of political power from nations hostile to the Faith, and its accumulation in those nominally at least, subject to the Church, is the one great fact of history from the earliest times to the present. Paganism, both in the eastern and western sections of the Roman empire, gave place to the religion once so cruelly persecuted, and so indignantly spurned. That mighty sceptre fell from the grasp of its gods into the hand of the people of the Cross. Nor has nationalized Christianity ceased to move toward ascendancy in the world from that day to this. The rise and spread of Mahomedanism form the chief exception, which,

after all, are but an episode in history. This, though once the great competitor of Christianity for the faith and dominion of the world,—for many centuries its prevailing antagonist; far superior in territorial extent, in vigour, and in prestige, to the nationalities that comprised what seemed a waning and doomed Christendom—is, nevertheless, not so much as noticed in the great prophetic vision which makes Christianity the last world-monarchy. Younger by centuries than Christianity viewed as a power, and seated in some of its earliest territories; possessing also the most famous countries of antiquity; extended from Inda on the one hand, to Spain and Africa on the other—its rise, zenith, and fall politically, fill but a thousand years; while Christianity, once menaced by Mahomedanism with extinction, more than surviving its encroachments, advances unimpeded to encircle the world. Mahomedanism propagated by conquest, and reared into empire by what all experience shows to be the most durable material for the purpose—the *theocratic* cast of a polity,—has yet, by the adoption of this very device, at once declared its human origin and inevitable doom. The spirit of conquest necessary to its existence is spent; and the *unprogressive* form of its civilisation leaves its people far in the rear of those not trammelled by such a system; which, however consonant to the genius of the East, or, perhaps, to the infancy of our race, is a sure prognostic of decadence in the more stirring moods of the world's later days.

No Power, properly speaking, is left to Paganism or Islamism on the whole globe, at this day; all is decrepitude and rottenness. The stranger,

the barbarian, the *Christian*, appears everywhere as the herald and instrument of their doom, which they seem as incapable of averting as the great idol in the Serapion when assailed by the monks and the populace who led on the work of demolition in early days.

History may be fairly challenged to show anything like this, namely,—the career of POWER *taking exclusively a religious direction throughout the world.* The Cross is even now *politically* regnant through both hemispheres, and already offers resistless demonstration to the verity of the ancient prophecy: 'The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.'[1]

Political auguries of Protestantism and Popery.

This fact is connected with another not less decisive in the same direction, namely,—that the Christianity confessedly founded on the exclusive authority of the Scriptures, is that which, more than surviving the attempts of its antagonists to crush it, *most remarkably progresses in its hold on the world.* This is strikingly exhibited in the attitude of our own country, and its derivatives, the States of America. The greatest breadth of territory, and the most commanding positions for influencing the world are held by these countries; while it is not a less significant fact, that Catholic powers have, for centuries past, *receded* from positions of ascendancy, and have, almost universally, shrunk within their primitive boundaries. France, and especially Spain, are obvious examples of this remark. Their decadence as Powers bearing on *the state and prospects of the race* is very marked in com-

[1] Isa. lx. 12.

parison with their former auspices. Nor is this in the least retrieved by their attempts to extend their dominion over Mahomedan kingdoms by force of arms. Little influence is gained in this way over the world, compared with that which springs out of *colonies* planted and nursed from the parent country by draughts of its industrial population, and by the peaceful employments of agriculture and commerce.

It is this great fact which marks as an exception, our Indian empire, and which makes it so loose and precarious a possession. Splendid as this is, yet no thoughtful Englishman can regard it with satisfaction. There is no *Saxon blood* intermingling with its people, and no possibility, owing to its traditions, its antiquity, its civilisation, and its religion, that any *amalgamation* should ever take place. The true glory of England lies in lands where her sons are indigenized; where her *language and institutions* are current; above all, where her *Protestantism* is in healthy action, adding moral vigour to enterprise, and giving to society the influences inseparable from 'the kingdom of God.'

The special destiny of nations.

It is a part of the divine economy as wielded by Christ, that nations should, in some instances, bear the characteristics of a *special destiny*. That each bears some relation to the whole, though untraceable by human skill, is all but a truism in the light of the many analogies of this kind pervading the course of Providence. More than this, the *special* truth breaks forth from obscurity as we seem to witness in the history, the characteristics, and the position of some *one* kingdom or other, the reflected image of God's ancient people. Not that in any

case, there is a literal transcript (for it is hardly a question if ever modern Israel will, when restored, exhibit the counterpart of their past),—but simply in this one great particular, that a nation or a race may be brought into very close alliance with *evangelical purposes*, and may very apparently, in certain stages of their development, become the chosen instrument for carrying them out. There is nothing weak or presumptuous in such a doctrine as this, nor vanity in the judgment that such a destiny has been reserved for our own country and race.

The Church bearings of English history.

(1.) It is obvious to the most cursory glance, that from the rise of the Reformation downward, the chief events of our history have all turned upon *Religion*. The struggle which issued in the overthrow of the Monarchy and its replacement by the Commonwealth, was a notorious example; as was also the after-struggle with a fanatical despot which brought about the Revolution of 1688, and the subsequent settlement of the *Protestant succession:* all this turned entirely upon *Religion*. In both cases, the crisis of *political* liberty was the crisis of religion, which—much the stronger element of the two, and acknowledged sovereign in this issue—has ever since held its sway, scattering blessings over the land in unexampled profusion.

All the changes political and moral, through which our country has passed during the last two centuries, have been marked by nothing like a prevailing indifference to religion, much less by a national apostasy from evangelical doctrine. 'The holy seed' has been 'the substance thereof.' Our theological literature is the proof of this; while as to the great spiritual movement of the last century, it

still expands without signs of halting, bearing light and life through other lands besides our own.

The facts which tell in support of these views, there is here no need to detail: they indicate a very remarkable series of providential disposals—remarkable, indeed, in themselves, but chiefly, as having been linked with our national history, *and with no other*. It is plain, that without these, or similar antecedents, the status of evangelical religion would, in our day, have been very different from what it is; and that no such organizations as those which Protestantism now exhibits for maintaining and spreading its principles through the world, could otherwise have existed. Our modern *missionary system*, in particular, which has taken so extensive a root in distant lands, and from which we are warranted in hoping for very great future results, is the offspring of this spiritual movement: it has given our country the lead, for the present, in the gentile mission for the evangelization of the world.

Retrogression of continental Protestantism.

(2.) It is also a singular, though a melancholy fact, that this advance in the state and prospects of evangelism has taken place while, with inconsiderable exceptions, European Protestantism has been not merely stagnant, but absolutely retrogressive. On the Continent, it has lost ground, not so much in territory as in power. So far from advancing, 'conquering and to conquer,' it has given every sign of decrepitude and approaching death. What is the condition of Holland, Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, or France, as compared with the era of Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, Arminius, or the Huguenots? How have the spirit and achievements of

those times been transmitted to our own? or those immortal names lived on in posterity? What has been the issue of this greatest of all human revolutions? and what, if we look at its present condition, has the world to expect from its living representatives?

National characteristics of an evangelical destiny.

(3.) With religious and political movements, and their bearings on peoples, there must be connected the peculiarities of local position, strong characteristics of independence, a highly *practical* temperament, material resources, enterprise, and moral prestige. A nation of marked evangelical destiny should hold wide avenues to all parts of the world. It should possess extensive commerce, a character for justice, truth, and beneficence, together with the power to make itself respected in its intercourse with nations. These are all great sources of influence, and, if rightly used, vehicles of religion as direct and universal as any merely national attributes can be.

Without attempting an apology for our country, or asserting that, in all instances, she has been true to these principles, or always maintained her honour unsullied, it is enough for our purpose, if, *on the whole*, her power has been righteous and beneficent in comparison with that of other nations; and if it appear, that, *on the whole*, her qualifications for a world-wide mission are beyond those of any other nation; and that, moreover, God has actually thus distinguished her in the service of his religion, especially in our own time.

Modern civilisation aids the spread of Christianity.

(4.) The course of observation hitherto pursued requires the notice of the combined influences of *modern civilisation* for church behoof. Reference

is here made to the sciences, whether speculative or physical—to philosophy in all its branches—to the arts in every department—to literature in the widest sense—and the round of mechanical inventions, especially such as most powerfully bear on the intercourse or productive resources of nations.

The bare mention of these is sufficient to suggest the immense preponderance which they must give to nations possessing them, over those whose civilisation belongs to epochs and orders of things that have passed away.

There is something marvellous in the fact, that all the young and salient life of the world lies in the West; and that, like the great gulf-stream, which so powerfully qualifies the temperature of Europe, it sets in toward the East in a mighty volume, so as to be fast changing the face of that ancient world.

Nor is it less marvellous, that in a broad, though inadequate sense, these elements are *christian.* Every new source of *power* is opened in christian lands, and there collected, as in a reservoir, for the supply of the world. Thence running off in all directions, these issues bid fair to carry away whatever is effete, corrupt, or false—whatever impedes human advancement, and would decree the *nunc stans* to the end of the world. Can this be chance? or can any philosophy throw light upon it which ignores the Bible, or the throne of Christ? In this aspect of his reign, it can hardly be said that 'clouds and darkness are round about him,' but rather, 'that all the people see his glory.'[1]

(5.) In this department of inquiry, it seems perti- Persecution—its uses to the Church.

[1] Psalm xcvii.

nent to look at the aspects of *persecution* toward the Church. Of persecution generally it may be affirmed, that while originating in the felt antagonism of Christianity by the world to its condition, religious and moral, and waged, with a view to the suppression of Christianity, by the terrors and annoyances which the world has the power to inflict—persecution is, nevertheless, strongly conservative of the spirit of the religion which it is meant to destroy. It keeps the Church more thoroughly free from surrounding contagion; it tends to enhance the value of religious *profession;* to bind its members more intimately together; and, by the force of external compression, to render the expansive power of the Church a hundredfold greater. In this state of things, the Faith, the Church and its workings, are all the interests men have in life; and they are committed in the most absolute and absorbing manner to their upholding. No half-hearted adhesion, much less any selfish policy, can stand the ordeal, which, like the fire, tries 'every man's work, of what sort it is.'

As for examples, it appears as if no other *rationale* need be sought of these effects, than what lies on the surface of the facts themselves; or, to use St Paul's words, in the contrariety of 'the flesh' and 'the Spirit.' This, however, is but the *human* side of the matter. It is plain from reflection on the very first recorded example of persecution, that the apostles and their people would not have been so thoroughly fitted for the mission of those times, or have been so entirely weaned from the fortunes of a doomed commonwealth, had they not been troubled and rejected by

the men of their own race. There is strong proof in the gospels, how intensely the fire of patriotism burned in their bosoms, and that nothing could have toned down their feelings to a harmony with their position toward coming events, but a process of hard travail, like that endured by their forefathers in Egypt, ending in their hasty expulsion.

Persecution made them feel that they had no *national* interests to maintain, to the damage or peril of their religion. It kept them aloof from the restlessness, the intrigue, and the policy of their unconverted brethren; and consequently, from the contamination inherent in such associations, as well as from participation in their overthrow. Persecution, in fact, *saved* them.

St Paul a great example.

A personal example may be adduced to this effect. St Paul, illustrious as he was beyond his fellows in gifts and calling, could not, humanly speaking, have run the course assigned him, had his position been different with respect to his countrymen, and *the party* with whom he had previously acted. In order to this, it was needful that he should be thrown at once into open collision with them, and that their rage should pursue him as a recreant champion of their interest, all the world over. The words of Christ, 'I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake,'[1] imply this doctrine. It was as much the discipline of *his nature*, as his circumstances, that demanded this. He could not otherwise have been fitted to preach a GENTILE gospel, nor have had the full measure of his heroism elicited, which his call to face the world imposed on him. He must, once

[1] Acts ix. 16.

for all, take his stand where he could have no temptation to compromise—draw his sword, throwing away the scabbard, and in a nobler sense than Athanasius, *alone* confront the world. In no other position would his powers have been turned to such account: in no other position could he have lived so much *in and for posterity;* nor, we may venture to say, have been so important a contributor to the New Testament. *To create one St Paul* was a great result for a whole age of persecution.

A test of the power of Christianity.

Of persecution it may be affirmed, that it is almost a normal state of Christianity, and the badge of the true Church: 'Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.'[1] Nor are its moral causes more marked than its criteria and operations. For instance, persecution is the test of the *efficiency* of the Christianity of any particular age or country, since men are seldom molested for rites or opinions merely, but for doctrines and influences which *tell on society.* No persecution was ever raised against the profession of doctrines bearing no hostility to the moral or religious state of the world, and requiring no renunciation of existing beliefs and practices, under penalties which the *consciences* of men were compelled to respect.

No religion but the christian was ever *universally* persecuted. This proves that no accidents of social position in the people whom it addressed, on the one hand, nor its own peculiarities, on the other, occasioned this antagonism, but solely the moral repugnance of human nature to its *requirements.* Persecution is, in truth, but *the reaction of Christianity on itself*—the rebound of its own stroke upon

[1] Matt. x. 22.

the world; and therefore, always represents the *momentum* with which it was given. Hence, the commencing era of Christianity was the most marked by persecution, as it was the most distinguished by the vigour of self-devotion; and the world in general was not charged, as it has been since, with any *elementary affinities* with its dogmas or its morals.

The same observation holds in respect to the antagonism of a *corrupt* toward a *revived* Christianity, as exemplified in the struggles of the Reformation. For this reason, persecution is always an *augury* of success, as well as a *result* of it. It is no sign of a failing, but of an advancing cause. The *deepest*, if not the broadest current of Christianity, has ever marked the eras of persecution. The attempts to narrow or obstruct its bed, only increase the power of its water volume, and necessitate a release of its accumulating weight from all temporary restraints.

The *rationale* of this fact is not less obvious than the fact itself. A principle omnipotent in itself, acquires its maximum force under the *strongest pressure*—it cannot reveal this but in proportion as it is *resisted*. This is the *test* of its resources, and the *condition* under which these can be fully demonstrated. These seasons are, therefore, the great seed-times of the Church, and are as much the preliminaries of its greatness as are the discipline of youth and the struggles of adversity to the eminency of the mature man.

It is a recovering measure.

Persecution also prevents the tendencies to decline indigenous to everything impacted into humanity, and thus made liable to its vicissitudes. It is as the frost which hardens the wood of the vine, or the knife which prunes away its redundancies.

These operations of nature and art minister to its fruitfulness; and thus does persecution set the Church in order to bear 'much fruit;' and though it cannot destroy these tendencies to decline, it does for a while hold them in check.

Persecution is also, to some extent, a *recovering process;* for as it never sets in on churches which have *wholly lost* their life, though, like the churches of the Apocalypse, they may have 'left their first love;' so its tendency and design manifestly are to bring them back to it. It is 'the refiner's fire, and the fuller's soap,' applied as to 'the sons of Levi,' that they 'may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.'[1]

Hence, churches are commonly in their purest state *under*, or immediately *after*, a persecution; and they have as commonly declined during seasons of security and indulgence. Humanly speaking, there was no possibility of preserving the fine gold from becoming dim even to dross, but by subjecting it to the action of the crucible. *Its own intrinsic virtue alone could not preserve it without aiding circumstances* which cut off the *sources of corruption.* The former was an insufficiency proven by events; the latter, therefore, was brought in by the all-wise Head of the Church to accomplish this end.

Christ rules its seasons and its intensity.

But the moral causes and results of persecution give us only a partial view of the policy of Christ in this branch of his administration. This is made fully apparent in the overruling hand which regulates its *seasons*, *its intensity*, *and its extent.* The original persecutions waged by the Jewish rulers against the Church, were either restrained or miti-

[1] Mal. iii. 3.

gated by the miracles of the apostles, and the force of public opinion; so that their aim was not only frustrated, but turned to the furtherance of the Gospel. The persecutions also that awaited the Church in the gentile world were similarly modified, until the Church had grown too strong for suppression, either by imperial edicts, or the tyranny of provincial governors. In the earliest times, law and political expediency, to some extent shielded the new-born Power from the crushing force of awakened jealousy. Indifference, and even contempt, would pass by the new sect as strange but harmless fanatics; and when, at length, *state* persecutions were instituted, though menacing and furious, they always stopped short of their end. Brutality and wantonness wearied themselves, and a truce was the result to christian suffering. Milder measures were tried; fresh holders of power showed better traits of character; patrons were raised up for the oppressed in the court, or the provinces; or wars and convulsions turned the mind of the empire into other channels.

Meanwhile, the people grew, as did Israel in Egypt, the more they were oppressed. Every fresh persecution, however seemingly more fierce and wasting than the former, was in fact the confession that Christianity was not only *unsubdued*, but becoming more formidable to its enemies. Every extinguished persecution was but a fresh knell sounding out the last,—this was but a question of time. A Power that could by passive resistance survive all the onslaught of its foes, was in reality *already victor*. Prestige, in the process of these contests, was transferred from the assaulting to the

defensive party. It was the asp biting the file, according to the fable, or the wave breaking on the sand. The spirit which confronts the world in the spectacle of men ready to suffer and die for their religion, as it is the sublimest form of heroism, so is it the most resistless force that can be arrayed against a foe; while the purchase which this spirit secures for itself over hostile peoples, and the limitations under which Providence compels them to act, make but one issue to persecutions possible.

Persecution (of which Rome ancient and modern may be deemed the impersonation) exhibits this fatuity, that it has wholly misconceived the true character of its antagonist, and the inevitable issue of its own measures in a direction adverse to the dominant interest. The Scripture read in the light of history, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath wilt thou restrain,'[1] is not only true to fact, but expository of the *principles* which have ensured its accomplishment, since persecution is one of the resources which God employs—human in its origin, and evil in itself—for the furtherance of his beneficent plans toward the world. He claims to restrain and subjugate *evil* to his sway, that he may turn it to good account in the complicated workings of his all-restoring purpose. If evil be permitted to put forth all its strength, it is with the view of eliciting the superior force of *goodness* in militancy with it; and of ultimately securing the fulness of its triumph when 'captivity is led captive.'

[1] Psalm lxxvi. 10.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Its Spiritual Phases.

Internal rule of the Church.

HITHERTO the rule of Christ has been followed out in its adjustment of mundane relations and influences to the weal of his Church: it is now to be traced in the still more remarkable course of its *internal polity.*

Human agency admitted, but modified.

1. The operation of his supremacy is detected in the sphere allowed to *human influences*, and the control exercised in *modifying* their issues. It is obvious that one of two theories of church rule might have been adopted, and made determinative of the fortunes of its future:

Either the first gifts might have been dispensed with such plenitude and constancy, that the Church might have permanently answered to its inspired archetype:

Or those gifts (in their essential form at least) might have followed a certain law *contingent on human agency*, and therefore, liable to great vicissitude.

The former would, to human apprehension, have seemed more glorious, more effective, more consonant to the origin and objects of the Church: the latter, to entail upon it merely human features,

and a course through the world dubious, and in the main, disastrous. It is obvious, however, that a scheme of church government could not involve *perpetual miracle* without practically superseding the established principles of the world's economy, and even contravening the principles of the Gospel, which, from beginning to end, are in perfect harmony with human nature.

These two objections appear insuperable, and equally conclude against the notion of the *personal reign* of Christ on earth, as inconsistent with the *probationary character* of human life. If, therefore, the history of the Church exhibits the general features of humanity, and a disproportionate amount of human influence and result, this was an alternative clearly foreseen by Him who could have ordered it otherwise; but who, in keeping to this line of policy, has shown that far more profound and comprehensive results were in his view, than could have been secured by a more direct and overbearing exercise of prerogative.

Parable of the Tares.

In this connection, the parable of the tares may be appositely introduced, inasmuch as its testimony is decisive to the effect, that our Lord here adopts the latter view as normal to his kingdom. It shows that this view is in accordance with his foresight and will. Without entering on a formal exposition of the parable, it is enough here to observe, that it embodies two doctrines of primary importance in ruling our views respecting this régime. The first is the *non-preventative* nature of its constitution—the second, its *non-remedial character*. In the former, it agrees with the earlier dispensations, and with the moral history of the world; in the latter fea-

ture, it is opposed to the law, and, indeed, to the theory of national religion, as such, altogether, which demands an *administration by the magistrate, or in conjunction with him.* In fact, it is the *reverse* of his secular jurisdiction. The magistrate is supreme in both, as departments only of the same commonwealth. Such was the religion of the Pentateuch; and such the version of Christianity generally accepted by the world before, under, and since the ascendancy of the Papacy—Eastern, Western, and Reformed Churches alike. The parable is explicit against any system as christian, either theoretically so constituted as to render *civil* penalties condign to *spiritual* offences, though it may not be expedient to exact such penalties—as well as against persecutions with their train of inhumanities. The parable is not against the maintenance of church purity by *spiritual* inflictions. The tares may, and ought to be cleared from the Church, or much of the New Testament is a dead letter; only this is not to be done by the hand of the magistrate. The tares are to be cleared out of *the Church*—but not *from society, much less from the world.* This is what our Lord forbids, but what has been done on the largest scale, and in plain defiance of his commandment. To few enormities have professedly christian men been so late and so partially awakened as to that of maintaining religion by *force*, and of exacting conformity to a dominant church, or a dominant creed, by penalties, which, if inflicted for other causes, would have been condemned as barbarous and absurd. The *mixed* condition of the field under christian culture—or the degeneracy of Christendom—is a terrible fact, and a signal triumph

of the enemy; but this cannot be remedied *by social appliances*. This is proved by history, which is a striking comment on the parable; for persecution has done more mischief to the wheat than to the tares, perfecting the success of the enemy by leaving to his products the entire mastery of the field.

Degeneracy of Christianity overruled for its spread.

2. A remarkable trait in the history of the Church is presented by the fact that *its degeneracy has been overruled for the preservation of Christianity in the world.* To have precluded its corruption by the adoption of any *special* expedients, would have been to circumscribe it within very narrow limits, and, consequently, to expose it to the peril of extinction. The condition of the world when Christianity was introduced, and long afterwards, presented such an utter antagonism to its doctrines and spirit—such a gulph between itself and the religion ordained to elevate and save it—that nothing short of a *miraculous* dispensation, such as that which accompanied its outset, could have sufficed to keep it in existence.

Failure of patriarchalism.

It should not be forgotten that scripture precedents uphold this opinion. The Noachic religion was, in the course of ages, utterly lost among the descendants of the patriarchs of the ark. No guarantee could be imagined so effective for its preservation as the deposit of this religion with *a single family*, thus casting the 'saving health' into the very fountain-head of the race. There was no world then in existence to be overtaken and recovered from a long apostasy by some special measure of Heaven's wisdom. *Prevention*, not cure, was its policy. But even this failed.

The second great expedient in the same direc-

Failure of Jewish nationalism.

tion, was that of Judaism. Here, as the patriarchal system for the world had failed, its substitute was limited to a *single nation.* The world, as such, was passed by as impracticable in any *preliminary* scheme of human recovery. Divine wisdom foresaw that such a scheme could not live in it, and that it would inevitably perish by the very law necessary to its propagation; and even as *the result of its diffusion.* To prevent this, it must be limited to a *people*, and bound up so closely with their national life as to make the one a security for the other. As a system for this purpose, nothing could be imagined more perfect than the institutes of Judaism; yet with what difficulty it was kept from utter corruption, the sacred history is witness. Apostasy seemed indigenous to the people, and relapse after reformation as normal to their nature as gravitation is to matter. How then could the introduction of a new and transcendental form of religion be expected to fare, had its *existence* been staked upon its *primitive integrity*—a religion to be launched upon the wide world of apostate manhood, rife in every kind of ungodliness which centuries of sufferance had fabricated; a religion devoid of every attestation adapted to arrest and subdue this wayward mass, the cardinals of whose protean religion were the prescription of its vices, and the deification of its virtues?

In the view of these facts of man's religious and moral history, is it too much to augur that the fate of Christianity would have been *extinction* at a very early epoch, perhaps even in the apostolic age, had it not been attempered by the heterogeneous elements surrounding it to a much lower and human level?

Its spirit and its beauty were, indeed, greatly impaired, but its *embodiment* was preserved. Its purity was lost, but its *dominion* was expanded; its essence was attenuated, but its *materialism* gave it a more tangible possession of the world.

Doctrines lost without human embodiment.

3. This depreciation was made subservient very especially to the *historic character* of Christianity. Religion never has existed, nor possibly could exist in the world as *a mere doctrine*, or matter of record, apart *from people as its witnesses*, and traditionary correspondences corroborative of its facts and records. Every fact or doctrine, no matter how true or important in itself, not thus impacted in human belief and tradition, *must necessarily wane into oblivion.* It must, for its existence and power, be committed to the current of a living humanity, and go down from age to age in unbroken continuity of recognition, *or it parts company with the world;* and if not retrieved in some fresh form, surrenders its supremacy to error, which is subject to no such contingency, and will supply the void by its unfailing fountain in human nature itself.

Without its historic character, where would Christianity have been at this day in the earth? Eighteen centuries have to be traversed historically, before its origin is scanned; but this mighty interval is traceable by its documents and institutes—by its peoples, and its profession, during the dark, and otherwise impassable chaos. This has been bridged over by the *historic* continuity of Christianity *under some forms of church embodiment*, however corrupt. It has thus become a broad and incontrovertible fact, set before the world for perpetual generations,

inviting inquiry as to its divine credentials from the thoughtful, and in some degree, *pre-occupying* the mind of the world with its ideas and influences.

Historical faith not recoverable even by a fresh apostolate.

It is obvious that such an arrangement of Providence was *indispensable* to the designs involved in the divine origin of Christianity. The scriptures of the New, like those of the Old Testament, must needs have been furnished with a competent vehicle of transmission to the latest ages. The facts, doctrines, and institutes of this religion must obtain currency in the world, or no ground-work could have been laid for its *onward movements* with the course of the race. No data would have been furnished for its reformation when corrupted, and no means of return to its pristine blessings when lost.

Isolated, and thus forgotten, *a new apostolate* could not have sufficed to restore its lost position in the world, since even miracles and inspiration could not have *rejoined* the religion disowned by time and oblivion to its great foundation-facts. These would have been *lost* in their remoteness, and could never again have regained their first power of propagation and belief. Christianity, even if supernaturally restored through any other *medium than the Scriptures and the Church*, would have been a baseless thing—without its proper array of divine and human antecedents,—while, cut off from the past, and not interwoven with the world's story, its very nature and form must have been transmuted from *a religion into a philosophy*. At the same time, it would have been entirely out of keeping with the earlier phases of Revelation, which uniformly exhibit *a deposit of facts and teachings* committed to the custody of men,

and given in such order and measure as concatenated the whole into an unbroken series of depending parts.

The office of the Church does not argue its infallibility.

This *historic* necessity for Christianity, however, by no means involves the doctrine of an inherent church *infallibility*, or of *inamissable* church rights; because the Church can only be the vehicle of Christianity under certain normal conditions *declared by the Scriptures*, and must become incapable of transmitting it, if (in fundamentals at least) it depart from the terms of the primitive commission. This the Church may do, and this it has done; yet it does not thence follow, that its office has been altogether a nullity, and that we are bound to this conclusion, or to the alternative of holding, as the Papists do, to her unimpaired integrity.

Enough was effected by Judaism—though itself to a fearful degree a failure—to serve the great end for which it was set up, namely, as a *preliminary to Christianity;* and the same may be said of the visible Church, though in an equal degree degenerate. It has not failed in its main office, that of handing down Christianity to the world of the present and the future, principally, by its tradition of the Scriptures, its outlines of theology, and its institutes, which, though associated with, and impaired by human interpolation, comprise the elements of catholic belief.

Church corruption overruled for reformation.

4. The traits of Christ's rule in the Church are further marked *in the bounds* he has set to the workings of church corruption, and in their *reactionary* subservience *to self-purification.* It must not be overlooked, that even the worst forms into which Christianity has been suffered to lapse, have been

incomparably more advantageous to the race than the best human systems which they superseded. Not to advert again to the forms of paganism which pervaded the Roman empire, and which gave place to Christianity, we may ask, how could the barbarism of Europe, which overspread it after that empire was broken up, have been modified, and made to furnish the elements of modern nations so far in advance of all their predecessors, had not Christianity in some form or other been mingled with it? But for the operation of this leaven, who knows what Europe might have been at this day? Its civilisation, however imperfectly it may reflect the genius of Christianity, is confessedly based upon it, and has to this moment marched on under its auspices. Without its Sabbath, for instance, what would society have been, even in its civil and political aspects? Has this one institute, though so imperfectly established, had no influence on our social refinement, or on our political freedom? What power but Christianity could have elevated the mind of nations to those conceptions of social justice and social wisdom, which have expelled from the bosom of Europe the taint of *slavery*, indigenous in the most famous nations of antiquity; or have so mitigated the deep-seated vices in society itself, that law and manners are far more just and pure than they ever were before? The prescriptive evils of ages have been abated or subdued by the force of enlightened opinion; and the moral progress of society made in some measure to keep pace with its material advancement.

The mediæval apostasy.

The evils of mediæval apostasy are truly stupendous, in their breadth and complications. The

threefold perversion of the Gospel which characterizes the system of Mediævalism called Catholic, has been fraught with a terrific retribution on the world, which fabricated it out of Heaven's holiest blessing, and which apotheosised its own image as that 'of jealousy,' in the temple of the Church.

Its corrupt theology.

(1.) In Mediævalism these things should be branded as anti-catholic and impious;—its corruption of what may be called the dogmatic theology of the New Testament, particularly its doctrines of mediation and grace; its assumption of mediatorial functions—priesthood, sacrifice, and propitiation; its creature worship; and its power over the realms of doom.

Its priestly assumption.

(2.) This also is to be marked with equal reprobation in Mediævalism: the assumption of a *supreme headship* in the visible Church, and of a rule which has not only deprived men of their *scriptural freedom and responsibility*, but impaired their whole *morale* in respect to the duties of piety, and the obligations of society. It makes man the mere *automaton* of the priesthood, and vassal of a spiritual tyranny: it travesties the requirements of God himself, and contravenes the plainest dictates of reason as to individual inborn rights.

Its false type of virtue.

(3.) The tyranny and superciliousness of this system are seen in the *type* of its virtue:—in its proscription of nature's deepest yearnings, and abrogation of her strongest laws—in its monasticism—its clerical celibacy—its pilgrimages, vows, and penances—in short, in its ascetic discipline throughout, to the exhibition and enforcement of which the authority of the Church has been accorded with a

zeal and inflexibility not inferior to the buddhist and brahminical systems of the East, but in total opposition to the moral system of the *Gospel*.

In these three great cardinal points we trace the leading features of 'the mystery of iniquity' which still deeply overshadows Christendom, both in the East and West, connaturalized by immemorial tradition, by national incorporation, and by every instinct of man's fallen nature; so that it would seem to have won for itself an imperishable position, having annihilated the very elements out of which adverse changes might be augured in human affairs. Parading its patent of divine authority before the world, and spurning the conditions of humanity—fallibility and change—it has as little to fear from human *progress* as from the blind submission which it demands. It *can* co-exist with civilisation and science in their most advanced forms, and lead captive the imagination and reason of the most cultivated minds. It has no more lost its power to proselyte, than its political ascendancy in leading European states. It does not seem to be perilled with respect to its position in the civilised world, whatever direction this world may happen to take, or whatever progress it may achieve, simply because men *must have a religion* as well as a civilisation, and faith as well as science.

Man demands a faith.

Unbelief in any and every form wars in vain against a positive system such as this, and is only like the mists that rise, and curl, and pass away upon the mountain sides. Its only *real* antagonist, is alone that 'one faith' which it has supplanted, whose resurrection is its death, and whose supremacy is its sure extinction.

Yet it ought to be acknowledged that Mediævalism in its worst form, has been by no means an unmixed evil to the race. Supposing it to have been extinguished *in the absence of gospel light*, what would have occupied its place? Historically, nothing presents itself as its rival but Islamism: but would the world have been happier under the fanatical sway of this truculent antichrist? or under the reign of an universal scepticism, had such been possible?

Error awaits its antidote.

It is one of the admirable methods of Providence to allow the existence, and even predominance, of things only comparatively good, or even relatively evil, until others may be developed of a better kind, and measures brought into action as antidotes to evil. No feature of the world's economy is more wonderful than this, nor any facts more patent than those which establish it. It is the key to much that otherwise would be as inexplicable as it is painful in the course of human affairs. The history of Mediævalism is a singular example of this kind, occupying a portion of the plans of Providence, in respect to the Church and the world, at once judicial and merciful. It has been a long-abiding and deep blot on the gospel age; yet it is only as a cloud which intercepts the splendour, yet does not tarnish, the surface of the firmament. In the meantime, it has had its office to perform, and its benefits to bestow. Piety, though impaired, was not destroyed by it. It existed, though latent: not identified with ordinances, congregations, or orders, but with *individuals*, enlightened, though not always, perhaps not even usually, prominent in name and influence: nor, even altogether free from the errors

of their times, and the deformities of mal-association.

We trace this singular fact through the entire history of religion, whether antediluvian or post-diluvian. Thus, Noah stands as the last representative of the holy family—'the sons of God;' Abraham and Melchizedek, as the representatives of the religion of the ark; and 'the residue,' of Elijah's age, of the religion of Moses and the Pentateuch. Thus, too, have we Daniel and Ezekiel as representatives of the remnant of the age of the captivity; and the 'election of grace,' 'the sealed' of 'the twelve tribes of Israel,' in the apostolic age, previous to the dispersion of the nation.

The Truth never without witnesses.

Never has this fact become obsolete in the worst succeeding times. The 'blindness' has been 'but in part;' and 'in measure' has God always debated with it. The Waldenses and Albigenses in Italy, the Lollards in England, the Jansenists in France, and 'the Brethren of the Free Spirit' in Germany, are but examples of the truth that God has never 'left himself without witness,' though speaking in whispers only. Then, when 'seven thunders have uttered their voices,' the prisoners so long in darkness have been bidden to go forth, and show themselves. These almost primitive forests of gigantic institutions which overshadowed the earth, covered also an *under-growth* of precious plants, scarce, and insignificant to the eye, but hereafter, as 'the branch of the Lord,' to become beautiful and glorious; against which 'no feller should come up' ere they should have been transplanted into all lands, and have garnished with more than Eden beauty the world.

In our examination of systems of belief, it is ever requisite to separate their abstract qualities, or their tendencies, from what may be called their maximum influence on human nature. Allowance must always be made for other influences than those of the *religion itself*, whether good or bad, upon peoples; otherwise conclusions will be drawn greatly at variance with facts. As, on the one hand, it cannot be inferred that the influence of the best system must be paramount; so, on the other, it cannot be inferred that the worst produces a *ne plus ultra* of effect. As long as there is *a moral law* in human nature, and *a remedial grace* in co-operation with it, so long, and so far, it is impossible for corrupt religions to transfer themselves to that nature as perfectly as does the seal to the wax. And though it be true that the corruption of the best thing in the world is as great a calamity as it is a sin, yet it is also true that it is impossible for human and satanic subtlety thoroughly to neutralize it, and to turn the blessing into an unmixed evil. Men, on the whole, are *better than their systems;* however *modified*, they are not wholly *represented* by them. In the worst instances, exceptions will occur: natures less susceptible of modification from without, more self-subsistent, more isolated from the agencies that control the mass, and more open to those higher influences whose tract, though not traversed by the throng, is yet not so far away as this fact would indicate. The 'Spirit of Truth' has never vacated those regions of manhood most pervaded with the 'Spirit of error;' nor would the examples in proof of this be so rare as may be imagined, or surprise be so great on their occur-

The consistency of the Spirit's office with forms of error.

rence, were his *office* more thoroughly apprehended, as well as the possibility of his dwelling in the midst of much darkness, and of his rearing much sincere and strong piety in bosoms distorted by prejudice and traditionary influences.

Much of the Christianity of very early times, when tried by a *purely gospel standard*, was undoubtedly defective, and even perverted. Doctrinal error and ecclesiastical predominance may be detected weaving with it a substance not its own. The simplicity and freedom of its primitive spirit were overcast by the human accessories which constantly accumulated with the march of centuries. But these did not suffice to *extinguish* every trait of spiritual and moral excellency in the Church, or to annihilate a *residuary* Evangelism, which, in spite of all adverse influences, wonderfully maintained itself. This might generally, perhaps, exist in the cloister, or the desert; or among sects and communities accounted heretical: in some instances, it was associated with tenets and customs not unexceptionable. Such abnormal states and communities existed from the earliest dates of church record; nor is it doubtful, that if church history had been more answerable to its name, dealing more with the *internal* state of Christendom, and less with the political and the secular, this truth would have received the most ample illustration.

Not to enlarge on the fact that the testimonies of the Fathers of the Church, as they are called, in reference to many of these, were prejudiced, and, from circumstances, untrustworthy—two facts of unquestionable certainty cannot be explained on any other supposition than that *a conservative and*

a regenerative element was always more or less extant in Christendom:

(1.) That ecclesiastical zeal found its chief outlet in attempts to *suppress it;* and that it watched for its appearance with the greatest jealousy.

(2.) The *promptitude* with which Christendom answered to the voice of the Reformation. A state is always pronounced rotten at the core, however externally flourishing, which is seen to vibrate and totter as panic-stricken, on what seem to be insufficient causes of alarm. Had there been nothing but soundness in the Papacy when the era of the Reformation dawned on it, there would have been *then* the same impossibility of originating a movement for its overthrow as there is *now.*

The pre-existing elements of the Reformation.

In truth, all the advantages for such a movement are in favour of the present time. It had then to be begun, and that too in the face of all Christendom without exception, and against the authority and power that had been gathered from a thousand years of growth and unchallenged prescription. In the face of all that was venerable, and in defiance of all that was terrible, that movement came on which has since come to a stand-still. Why? The answer is not to be sought in the law of circumstances, the character of the movement, or the men that originated it; but *in the different religious states of the same community.* The Reformation rather *combined* than *created* the elements of its own existence. It drew out from the Papacy the latent elements *not homogeneous with itself*, and therefore separable on the occurrence of the requisite *impetus:* which elements have not since accumulated, or, at least, in the same degree. Of the Papacy of that

period, the language of the oracle to Rebecca is descriptive: 'Two manner of people are in thy womb.' The birth-throes of that hour, therefore, brought relief; but the representatives of that birth are still living in Jacob and Esau, who, though of the same mother, bear no family likeness.

Hence, the Reformation, though an event of but a few years, was, in fact, the *preparation of centuries.* Who were the Albigenses in Languedoc, or the Waldenses in the valleys of Italy?—Who 'the Brethren of the Free Spirit' in Germany?—the Lollards in England?—or, earlier still, the churches that flourished in the Principality before Augustine arrived—and in Ireland and Western Scotland, before the Papacy held an inch of territory in these realms?

It is easy to trace, in almost all parts, and in all ages of Christendom, either an earlier and purer faith, or a better element of it co-existent with its corruptions,—as the tints of sunset, or as the streaks of sunrise.

The sources of the Reformation.

Moreover, *the Rule that controls error* is identical with that which restores truth, not by an extraneous intrusion, much less by a *republished* revelation or *renewed* apostolate, but by a recurrence to the neglected standard of truth—the Scriptures; and by the secret motions of 'the Spirit of Truth,' creating in men the conviction of their supreme authority, and endowing them with courage to assert by action and suffering the gospel freedom.

All church history is in proof, that no reformation from Mediævalism, whether in eastern or western Christendom, is possible by any *merely negative theory*, or the resources of merely human wisdom.

Mediævalism is more than the expression of centuries of life under certain social conditions, which being changed, the system itself becomes null: it is rather a characteristic development of human nature under christian conditions, which can only be arrested by the alteration of these conditions. In a word, there is but one remedy for the evil of false Christianity, as for false science. The presentation and reception of *the true* Reformation must be a *principle*, not a modification—the infusion of a *life* into the dead mass, not the removal of *surface incongruities*. Only Evangelism can effect this; nor can anything perfect the work once begun, but the same appliances again brought into action by Him who 'endues with power from on high.'

Impossibility of renewing the Reformation in proof of its divine origin.

Such was the Lutheran Reformation in the main. Hence its strength and spread. Hence, too, the singular phenomenon of its *stationariness* since its primitive spirit has departed. It has made no new conquests, and with difficulty holds its own. Thus the two antagonist systems, though representing opposite states of religious sentiment, are both characterized by the same event—death,—the one, by exinanition—the other, by repletion. The latter is the case of Popery; the former, that of an unevangelical Protestantism. The difference between them is but this, that the one *embalms* its remains, and confers on them the glory of lying in state; the other, decomposed by the action of formalism, or rationalism, leaves its bare skeleton to bleach on the ground.

The *rationale* of Reformations, humanly taken, seems to be this: they are the product of *reactions* from corruptions whenever a system becomes *over-*

charged with them, and as such, they must of necessity be *spontaneous* in their origin and results. They must come forth from *within*, not from without; nor can they be *forced* or *forestalled* by external pressure without injuring the cause sought to be advanced, provoking resistance against aggression on prescriptive authority and public rights. If there be no sight and sense of the evils alleged, in the community infected with them, what is an attempt at reformation from without, but holding up a light to the blind, with the added provocation of telling them they are so?

If there be one lesson more fully brought out than another by the polemics of Protestantism and the Papacy, it is the *divinity* of that great movement which founded the one and marred the other; since all attempts to redintegrate it have to this hour been failures; as much so as were those of Israel to push their borders beyond the lots which God had given them.

The true policy of the reformed churches lies in another direction—to strengthen themselves in the land of their possession; not only as the best means of securing their hold on posterity, but of ultimately reaching the very peoples placed for the present, beyond their influence.

Revivals and missions proofs of Christ's rule.

(5.) The rule of Christ within his Church is seen in the means which he provides for its *reinforcement and extension*. These are two: Revivals and Missions. By the first, provision is made for the reinforcement of existing churches; by the second, for the planting of new ones. The one is a *home*, the other a *foreign*, movement. The one is designed to fill up a pre-existing occupancy of territory; the other, to

enlarge its borders. The one is a public testimony to the spiritual and moral characters of Christianity; the other, to its aggressive and catholic nature.

Again, these two movements are inseparably related. The *exterior* movement is the effect of the *interior*. Genuine Christianity is essentially propagative. As LIFE is generative, so is this highest type of it the highest phenomenon of the kind. All examples of the origin and spread of Christianity, as far as open to our cognizance, prove, that it is in *the intensity of its living force* that the true *rationale* of its progress is found; not in its institutional efficacy, much less in its prescriptional position in the world. These, though not to be depreciated, often of the highest value, may be perverted into hindrances, and may embody a spirit, if not of antichrist, yet one so uncongenial to Christianity as to render its moral exhibition and spread a thing alien to their existence.

Christianity a power, not an institute.

The divine operation which restores *life* to the Church is the recovery of its natural, free-born energy. This Christianity is no longer in any country or community an *institution;* henceforth, it is a *Power*, and a Power, too, of that rank which forbids us to assign limits to its efficacy. While it refuses alliance with any modes of profession as such, which men have emphasized as the very throne of Truth, and of God himself, it informs everything not uncongenial to itself with the spirit of a true catholicism; exorcising the spirit which makes sectarianism, *schism*.

The recovered tone of churches in earnestness and unity is the recovery of prestige in its highest form, since this legitimately issues from the mani-

fested presence of their Head by his saving operations, so marked and extended that the social laws of humanity are themselves transferred to his service, and become the vehicles of the most rapid and profound effects. The latent germs of religion in human consciences, long repressed and enfeebled by systematic counteraction, suddenly burst into stem and flower, like an eastern desert after rain. The thousand hindrances which in the form of conventional influences, as well as sins, hedge up the man from self-surrender, are cleared away at once. Example becomes omnipotent *for*, as it had been previously *against*, religion; while many a champion is raised up to breathe its spirit into multitudes of the surrounding dead, or to wave its holy banner in distant lands.

Thus Christianity, from its very genius as a spiritual system founded on Redemption, and administered by a divine agency, *becomes an exception to every other religion in the law of its progress*, as well as in the nature of its effects. If, on the one hand, it may sink to a minimum in its sphere of operation; on the other, it can rise to a maximum without any change in its laws, or strain on its resources. It does not require an array of human assistances (which obscure, if they do not preclude its divinity), to enable it to make head against opponents, and to solve its own problem. That solution it undertakes for itself. Often putting the world, and even the Church, into the humble position of the mere witnesses of its power, it shows how the very obstacles to its triumphs, whether present or final, though seemingly insurmountable, may be converted into facilities for this consummation.

The work of the Spirit and the Mediator co-extensive.

On glancing at the Record, we see that the work of the Redeemer and the Spirit are one; and that no just inference can be drawn from the character of the one that does not bear on that of the other. If the one be world-wide, so is the other; and if the one be perfect as a remedial *provision*, the other is perfect as a remedial *administration*. As there is nothing greater than the work of Christ, so there is nothing greater than the work of the Spirit—nothing *ulterior*—nothing *residuary*. If a divine person could effect the one, a divine person can effect the other. Dispositions of mind consonant to the doctrines and purposes of the Gospel, are the things which the world needs—an interior movement toward them counteractive of the agency of the evil One, and of the native aversion of the human heart. This can come only from the agency of God himself upon the soul; it is utterly beyond the power of men subjectively considered, or of men as agents for working them in their fellows. Deity is required for this purpose—and Deity is given to accomplish it. This completes the economy of Grace, and makes the evangelization of the world a possibility, though, apart from divine assurance, by no means an ascertained event of the future.

Missionary success guaranteed by Christ.

Then, as to the extension of the Church by Missions: such a measure not only accords with its origin; it is a plain pursuance of the apostolic commission to its last fulfilment—the publication of the Gospel 'to every creature.' The terms of this commission not only yield ample countenance to Missions; they demonstrate also their apostolicity and efficacy, since on their behalf the Lord has distinctly pledged himself: 'Lo, I am with you *always*, to the

end of the world.' This language of Christ gives us the idea of universality as the scope of his religion, and of a long-protracted struggle in the business of its diffusion; moreover, of a co-existing oversight on his part, ensuring its ultimate triumph. Missions may, therefore, place themselves under this powerful ægis, because whatever is needed for the accomplishment of the divine purpose is guaranteed by the same scripture which ordains the task.

Mediæval missions.

Nor did Mediævalism lose sight of this when it had flung its shadow from the centre to the circumference of Christendom. The missionary, in the form of some austere devotee, went forth at the bidding of his superior, and the impulse of his zeal, to penetrate the 'regions beyond,' to publish what he deemed the Gospel, and to gather disciples from the most outlandish and incult pagans. He sought to plant the standard of the cross in the heart of savage wilds: to found his monastery, to rear his church, and to work into the surrounding mass by the force of his character, by the exhibition of his symbols, and the co-operation of the cenobitic institute, which formed an admirable platform for the diffusion of his leaven throughout a land.

Thus lands and kingdoms were won to the Church with a rapidity only inferior to the permanence of these acquisitions; especially, as the policy almost uniformly seems to have been that of securing *the magnates of barbarism*, not as trophies merely, but *as patrons* of the faith.

From the nature of the case, the churches of

The Reformation not missionary.

the Reformation, even had they retained their life and purity, could not, for a while, have become extensively missionary. Their work lay nearer home. To repel and vindicate, to consolidate and perfect, were the appropriate duties of a belligerent era. Lodgment first, movement next, is not only the order of national acquisition, but of church progress also. The one is the sequel to the other, just as the rest and movement of the ark alternated under the divine auspices in the wilderness.

It was also, perhaps, necessary that the religion of the Reformation should for a season be allowed to *defecate*, during which process it might throw off much belonging to Mediævalism that had been transfused into it, and thus might more fully recover the tone of simplicity and self-reliance so eminently characteristic of apostolic Christianity. In this sense, it was not expedient to put 'old wine into new bottles,' or to overlay the 'new garment' with 'the old.' The inveterate spirit of ecclesiasticism, which, though not confined to the Papacy, has no place provided for it in the evangelic economy, must, to a certain extent, have died out of the Church ere it could become competent to deal with the great problem of universalizing Christianity.

Missions essentially catholic.

Purely elementary Christianity alone could become a catholic Christianity, unless a return had been attempted to the programme of the Papacy. *No one church* could enter on so vast a field, or seek to impress its own ideal on the unconverted sections of the race. The effort must be a joint, not a solitary one. The principle of the division of labour must be applied to the enterprise, and specialities be constrained to remain at home as super-

fluities; or their compatibility with catholicity be fully allowed.

Thus the churches—by the necessity of association for a common purpose, and by the very reaction of a common object, when piously contemplated—would be as much improved in spirit, as before they had been advanced in doctrine. The *application* of 'the truth' in this, as in many other instances, rectifies theories, showing that whatever militates against *duty*, is either false or nugatory; and that no one or other of the churches should hope to entail its own idiosyncrasies on *the world*, but learn to content itself with the simple transmission of *the family likeness*. The missions of catholic Protestantism, in addition to the great moral features of a pure Christianity, evince their sufficiency for their original purpose as ascertained in the great commission. If their scale of operation has been comparatively limited, and their success, territorially considered, less than the sanguine had expected, eutopianism should be chastened when it is remembered that the religion of inspiration and miracle hardly made headway in the world to the same extent as modern missions in the same space of time; that the preparation of the programme of world-conversion was not too mean a task for Heaven to be employed upon for many centuries, and its accomplishment to employ it for as many more; that to give *testimony* to the world is the office of the Church, rather than to *convert* it; and that slow, painstaking toil, which has little to show, is not only not less honourable than great success, but, like the seed concealed in the earth, it is the dead parent of the living family multiplied a hundred-fold.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Its Administration and Prospects.

THE following is a *resumé* of the history of Christ's rule over the Church as contained in the foregoing section.

The Church bound up with the system of the world.

1. That the course of this rule is not an extra-providential thing,—an exception to the current of the world's affairs, as was that of the Jewish Theocracy,—but one thoroughly in harmony with them. The agencies by which this rule has been carried on, are as thoroughly human as in other departments of Providence, registering no exceptions entitled to be regarded as miraculous,—a fact very disappointing to a certain class of thoughtful minds. Accordingly, these, as if feeling this want in the regime, have been on the constant lookout for something new and supplemental; whereas the Church, at least so far, has been bound up with the great system of the world, and seems to be prospectively also identified with it so long as it shall last. From this we seem entitled to argue, that the resources necessary for the perpetuity of the Church, and the full attainment of its objects, are actually furnished by the world's economy, and

remain only to be directed by the same infinite intelligence and grace to their final issue.

Compatibility of one unbroken purpose with a course of seemingly adverse events.

2. That this history also suggests the compatibility of maintaining a purpose unbroken respecting the Church, with a long course of events, many of which seemed adverse to it; that, in truth, such a purpose is so long-sighted and comprehensive, when affirmed of the Deity, that its arrest or contravention during epochs of counter tendency cannot be presumed in the least to have superseded, though seemingly suspending it. Slowness and alternation are the Bible characteristics of Providence, and they accord with the teachings of experience. Thus, the purpose with respect to Israel's establishment in the land of promise was suspended by their sin of unbelief, for forty years; while the threatening to exterminate them, and to create a new people from the family of Moses alone, shows that it might have been delayed for *centuries longer*, without any danger of an ultimate failure.

Centuries required for the rise of a nation.

It is obvious, too, that for the rise of nations to their zenith, many centuries are required; that this period comprises intervals of comparative retrocession, and adverse complications threatening their existence; but which are afterwards found to have been indispensable to their ultimate greatness.

A similar process may also be observed in the career of human civilisation and scientific advancement. Here, there is not to be marked a measured flow of advance, a mechanical adjustment between means and ends, or a direct connection between cause and effect. On the contrary, we see ebbs and flowings; pauses, declensions, and onward throes; lost things recovered; old things renewed; and

doctrines apparently consigned to oblivion brought out again instinct with power to move the world.

Christ's headship guarantees church permanency.

These features of Providence are so obvious, and the illustrations of them so abundant, as to render further remark in this direction needless. The history of the Church is but a great example of the same kind; and therefore it would be preposterous to argue, from its past or present position, anything derogatory to our Lord's supremacy over it, or to its own destiny. His headship, *primarily*, only guarantees church permanency: that so long as the world shall last, the doctrines and institutions of Christianity shall be maintained in it, and shall exercise a certain influence (more or less) over the destiny of our race.

This fact alone is of great importance; but taken in connection with the general tenor of the collateral facts already noticed, it amounts to a phenomenon, demonstrative not merely of the existence, but of the necessity also of Christ's sway.

Church existence not compromised by Mediævalism.

3. That our inability to identify throughout the entire period of church history the continuance of its primeval type, does not compel us to accredit the institutions and influences of Mediævalism, in order to escape the dilemma of losing the Church amidst the human accessories which have overlaid and disfigured it. If the New Testament idea of the Church be steadily adhered to, its *visibility* in the broad sense, must be allowed to be somewhat equivocal; while its *spiritual elements* must be supposed to have been more or less co-existent with all these phases and seasons. The point to be maintained, is the reality of the Church as a great *present fact* in the world.

Reality of the Church a present fact.

Clearly, then, the rule of Christ has issued in this; and our concern is therefore much less now with the past than with *the future*. By the Scripture, and by our reason, the Church is put before us as *a whole*,—not in mere segments, though these may have occupied centuries for their development. We are forbidden by the law of our *position* as well as by our reason, to judge of this matter as if all the facts lay before us. The eighteen centuries which comprise the history of the Church must, even in the light of many national histories, sink into insignificance; while as to its future attitude in the world, these may bear a less proportion to its reserved fortunes than the ages that passed over our own land before the invasion of the Romans, or over Gaul before its conquest by the Franks.

Everything in Revelation and Providence preparatory and prospective.

In the entire course of Revelation, and even of Providence, everything seems to bear *a preparatory and prospective aspect:* everything teems with prognostics—nothing is stamped with characters of *finality*. What were all the promises scattered over the centuries of the primeval world, but seeds of the harvest of a remote future? what Judaism, but a representation and shadow of some great future portent? and what the simply historic elements of Christianity, but the grand prognostic of Heaven's designs for the untold generations of an unborn world? The enthronement of Christ as the divine-human Head of the race, is to be regarded less as a fact than as *a portent* in its aspect toward the world. In itself, it may be said to be all prophecy as to the future of the world, contained in both Testaments, and guaranteeing the transla-

tion of their divine import in the last scenes of the world's great drama.

For the consummation of this sublime purpose, the *sole administration in existence* is that handed down to us from the times of the apostles, and contained in what we are used to term the Church. It is historically as plain as from the Scriptures, that the Jewish Church has been just as long defunct as the christian Church has been in existence; that the rights and honours predicated of it, in their eternity and fulness, belong to an ulterior and better covenant, and to an administration which rose on the setting sun of its ancient glories.

The perpetuity affirmed of David's house a type of Messiah's age and people.

The 'for ever and ever' so frequently affirmed of the reign of David's house—of the sacred people, their religion and polity—are to be construed in the *light of after facts*, and are undoubtedly the heritage of the Messiah's age, and the Messiah's people. The whole field of the world is clearly their own, and the whole flow of its duration comprised within this sacred cycle; while, if we look through the fortunes of the Church as hitherto developed, we see nothing at war with either the avowed purpose of Christianity, or its own registered anticipations. For example, should we glance at Daniel's prophecy of the rise of the fifth monarchy—its peculiar characteristics as a *religious power*, its wonderful spread, and all-conquering energy—we may regard it as being already very mainly, if not entirely fulfilled in *the political* ascendancy of the christian religion throughout countries once famous as the centres of pagan power.

Should we turn to the gospels, do we not find the

The predictions in the gospels and epistles verified by church history.

fortunes of 'the kingdom of heaven,' as verified in the world's story, portrayed with the greatest fidelity by our Lord himself in the parables, found chiefly in Matthew, particularly in the parable of the tares of the field? Or if we turn to the epistles, do we not find in St Paul's writings an unequivocal foreshowing of 'the mystery of iniquity,' and of the man of sin?—of 'the perilous times' which mark 'the last days,' and which show the Church in a position of strange contrariety to the bright auguries of her birthday and her espousals? Or lastly, should we turn to the Apocalypse (without attempting to analyse its contents, or to affiliate events), what do we see, but a succession of perturbed and darkened scenes, characteristic of confusion, of contest, and of prevalent evil; little in accordance with the humanized ideal of an administered 'kingdom of heaven' on earth; yet a wondrous mirror of fact, and hieroglyphic of history?

The course of the Church, according to the apostles, not short and triumphant.

These notices of inspired testimony as to the fortunes of the Church, amply suffice both to correct the error of supposing that the apostles ever imagined its course would be a *brief and triumphant one;* or that they anticipated any *new administration within the christian era.*

We cannot suppose the apostles themselves to have regarded the great commission to 'preach the Gospel to every creature,' as an injunction to be fulfilled by them personally, or by the Church of their times: it was rather the watchword *to the whole Church of the future.* As before stated, the then existing world meant the Roman empire, not the planet as now mapped out, and the nations of both hemispheres. The world then, and for many

an age afterwards, was to a great extent sealed up; and even now it is but imperfectly opened. Can we then suppose the Head of the Church to have been shortcoming in his knowledge of this fact, or of the epochs and agencies necessary to unfold it? All the lights and powers of modern times must of necessity be created, ere the human race could by intercourse and assimilation become *prepared for church operations* in anything like adequate breadth. Is he not to be regarded as the Author of all these movements? Could he then be supposed to intend to clip his chief purpose in carrying on such an economy as this, of the requisite *co-measurement*, either as to time, or the agencies proper to co-operate in its execution?

Existing ordinances of Christ sufficient to reach the world.

Far too narrow a view is implied if not avowed by some orders of religionists,—namely, that the world is not to be reached by the existing ordinances of Christ, in the Church, and out of it, all bearing on this as their common end; since, according to this notion, *all* things needed not to be given to him for the Church: they are of necessity rather *superseded* than given by this supposed exercise of a *reserved* prerogative. Thus also is precluded the conception worthy of Deity, that he is directly concerned in administering the christian religion; that as this requires nothing short of an absolute command of all mundane powers, so those powers are actually made tributary to this end. The impression of its divinity is *lowered*, not heightened, by any theory that restricts the relations of Christianity with respect to agencies outlying itself; and that resolves its consummation into a miraculous forth-putting of omnipotence. The great lessons of the past tend

in the opposite direction, showing, that as the basis of church existence and church object must be the antecedent moral economy of the world, so the providential economy of the Church is in like manner adjusted to the same,—so much room being left for *supernaturalism* in both as suffices to their respective ends, while full scope is given to the powers of the beings most interested in them, and most concerned in working them out.

Christianity as a race-religion requires time for its supremacy.

This seems to teach that the religion to be propagated is a *race-religion*, and that its design as such *can* be carried out under the existing system, providing *time* be allowed. Should the faith of a Christian be less than this, when even a worldly philosophy dotes much upon the doctrine of human progress and perfectibility? To revert to the first point—the race character of this religion—is there anything more assumed in this (apart from express gospel testimony), than on God's part a return to primeval law, and the doctrine of race-origin from a human pair? Is this anything more than the earliest patriarchy; viewing Judaism as a departure from race-religion, or rather as a parenthesis in its chapter, to end where Christianity begins? May not the Abrahamic promise, 'In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed,' be regarded as a transcript of a more ancient promise to the great Father of humanity? and may not the *race-aspect* of the promise in this prior acceptation of it, be taken as shadowing out to the natural seed of Abraham in their *nationality*, its grander catholicity in its after world-fulness? According to St Paul, this was the Gospel as preached to Abraham: the Gospel as embodied

Judaism a parenthesis between Patriarchy and Christianity.

even in the Pentateuch, though in the strictest sense a record of national religious law. Such was the Gospel as sung in the glorious strains of tabernacle and temple worship, even during the palmy ages of the Jewish commonwealth, and the severest isolation of the Jewish people. In the Psalms they sang a language that they knew not; for *race-religion* as strongly tinctured these inspired odes, as did the history and honours of the peculiar people.

Race-religion is unmistakeably the great theme of Jewish prophecy. All its seers are at one with its minstrels in ante-dating a world-gathering into the Messiah's fold. All national predilections and sympathies, intense as these were beyond example in the bosom of the Jew, are made to give place to, or are rather absorbed in, this grand vision of regenerated man. What might be regarded as the *national creed*, is to a large extent overruled by the broader views of their vaticination, making them catholic against their name.

Christ's relations with humanity, not with Jews only.

Opening on the gospels, it is true that, at first sight, Jesus of Nazareth appears merely as 'the King of the Jews;' but our vision widens as he passes from stage to stage of his earthly history. His relations, though comparatively circumscribed, are seen to be with *Humanity*, and not with Jews only. His teachings and his actions show a far wider bearing than his local attributes; and 'the Son of man' unveils a grander personage than even 'the Son of David:'—the one is the Jewish, the other the Gentile side of his character.

It is not true that the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles was primarily a revelation given

by the apostles to the world: it was the Master's own, though afterwards more fully developed when the agencies for accomplishing it had been furnished. Without seeking throughout the four gospels for a series of confirmatory testimony to this effect, are not a few, gathered from the very surface of John's gospel alone, amply sufficient? What is said of the true light, 'but that it lighteth every man that cometh into the world'? What was the soul of the Baptist's preaching, but 'behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'? What is reported of our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus, but that 'God so loved the world' —not his favourite people only—and that 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved'?[1] Can anything be plainer than that according to these scriptures God has set his heart on the salvation of the *world;* and that by the mission of his Son this design is to be accomplished?

These predict the world's conversion, and the sufficiency of the apostolic gospel for this.

Attention should be particularly directed to scriptures of this class whenever the *prospects* of Christianity are considered; for they possess the double advantage of being the most explicit predictions as to the world's conversion, and also of affirming the *efficacy* of the evangelical economy as it was apostolically settled and transmitted to our times. Have we not in them the doctrine of the Cross, for example, preached by the Lord of the Cross himself? And the doctrine of *faith* in the Cross as an inseparable counterpart to the Cross itself, to be propagated through the extent of that world for which God gave his Son?—reminding us

[1] John iii. 17.

of the words of St Paul, where he notes the great evangelical law of world-wide transmission, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' 'How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?'[1] Or can we forget that glorious outbreak of gospel benevolence issuing from the Lord's lips when on his way to Calvary: 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me'?[2] Or, finally, his own exposition to his apostles of the glory of the dispensation then about to be inaugurated: 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'[3]

Without further drawing on apostolic testimony, particularly that of St Paul, it is enough to point again to the immediate introduction of the Gospel to the world, prefaced by the sublime pentecostal symbol of the cloven tongues, and the linguistic gifts of the Holy Ghost to the first preachers of the Cross—the scenes of their labours, and the *gentile* character of the greater part of the primitive churches. All these things are in the nature of *types and predictions* of the wide and deep course prescribed for the Gospel. The first march of truth and of the Church went directly to the heart of the world—at once the signal of contest and the harbinger of ultimate, though long delayed, triumph.

Catholic features of the gospel dispensation.

Looking, then, at the facts and doctrines of the Gospel, the character of its Author, the testimonies of his servants, the properties of his religion, and the needs of the world, we seem to see in these,

[1] Rom. x. 14. [2] John xii. 32. [3] Luke xxiv. 47.

unmistakeable auguries of its destiny, and to gather an inspiration to our faith which no events of the past or present have the least power to abate. As saith St Paul, 'We see not yet all things put under him: but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,' etc. As yet, we do not see a world subjected to the sway of truth and holiness; but what do we see?—*An enthroned atonement in Jesus*, a gospel ordinance promulgated, a Church instituted, and a purpose in the ascendant to make it known to the ends of the earth—'that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.'[1] The when and the how of this consummation may, indeed, be questions addressed to blank silence, and the oracle sought, be but the echo of the questions themselves; but if faith have the power to remove mountains, it is simply because it recognises His truth and sufficiency, to whom nothing is impossible. 'The arm of the Lord,' truly, must be plied in such an undertaking as this; while men are, at best, but humble accessories: as the ancient proverb ran, a God is required to untie the knot. But this is precisely the great truth on which the whole system of Christianity reposes, and in the realization of which by individuals and churches, is found the spring of an unfailing strength and a buoyant hope.

Nor may it be said that any statements found in the New Testament, looking as if the current of gospel truth and blessing were predesignedly partial, are against these doctrines of unrestricted universality. The primitive doctrine of *election* had more reference to a people thrown out of covenant rela-

Election primarily a church distinction.

[1] Heb. ii. 9.

tions with God, and to the law which inaugurated their successors in this privileged condition, than to any principle in the Gospel at war with this surface-breadth of its benevolence. *Descent and nationality were henceforth abrogated as grounds of a covenant relation, and of a church status.* The Gospel is a *world-religion*, which Judaism never was, nor could be; and hence the basis of 'election' to its church privileges and personal blessings, necessarily partook of this catholic design. Teaching, faith, and baptism, were properly *human*, not *national*, conditions of a religion of such aims, and showed that 'the election of grace,' so far from being a more restricted basis of privilege than Judaism, was, in fact, the true counterpart of its *world-wide* character. The opposite view would entail upon us the belief of this anomaly, that the new dispensation was, in a most capital point, a *step backward*, and the 'grace and truth' which 'came by Jesus Christ,' a straiter thing than 'the law given by Moses.' The one recognised the election of a *nation* to the honour of being God's people, and made them free to all the blessings of this dispensation; while the other, with all its advance of redemptional light and grace, is in a high degree exclusive.

True, St James affirmed that God had 'visited the Gentiles, *to take out of them* a people for his name,' rather than to *embody the whole mass* in that privileged designation: but, in the nature of things, could the Gospel in the apostolic age be more than partial in the publication and offer of its blessings? —or could it do more than *offer* these blessings, without also undertaking to constrain men's belief?

Substantially, the relations of the Gospel to the

That the Gospel has not yet reached the world, no proof that it is not to do so.

outlying world remain to this day what they were in the beginning: the *world* is not yet reached; but we fail to recognise in this fact the least proof that the Gospel was meant to do no more than it has done for the world. Though far from affecting to search out this mystery of God to perfection, we are yet unable to see that the purposes of God's love toward the world have been fully interpreted *by the facts of christian history*, and are far from believing that *he willed them to be precisely what they are*. If sin be a possibility under a remedial system as well as under a moral law, we are constrained to admit that the will of God may be *contravened* in the one case as well as in the other; and that, consequently, the facts of gospel history as it respects the world, are solvable by its own *published principles*, as far as we have to do with them.

Without pursuing this subject further, the point here meant to be maintained is this, that the plain declarations of the Gospel touching the extent of its own mission to the world cannot be neutralized by any supposed esoteric doctrine belonging to the system which it reveals. But this is done, in truth, whenever its breadth of destiny is set face to face with tenets restrictive of its catholic grace. The two positions militate with each other, and in their strict application bring duty to a stand-still. True, the past and present relations of Christianity to the world may be explicable on either theory; but we are bound to take that which, in agreement with Revelation itself, exhibits the broad side of human duty, and the alternative of human delinquency.

It would seem that the principles of the Penta-

teuch and the prophets, are in this respect plainly applicable to the course of the Gospel; and that the facts of the Old Testament Church correctly foreshadowed those of the New. For this judgment we have the explicit warrant of the latter. It may be also true, that the future world-spread of Christianity, which we conceive established, may seem to depend more upon the same sovereignty which had previously restricted it, than on that which gives more to human will and human agency. Still, it cannot be fairly inferred from the facts that the one theory has any advantage over the other in this respect, since the course of human nature is, as to matters where no *immediate* influence of God may be supposed to operate, so various, and often opposite to itself, that to infer a future from a past would turn out a most deceptive conclusion. Events the least likely in the eye of reason and the teachings of experience, often overtake us with a surprise which shows that we are at best but imperfectly acquainted with the *conditions* which determine the actions of men, whether individually, or in their social capacity. Besides, on no evangelical theory can the doctrine of *sovereignty*, in the bestowment of unwonted spiritual power for the propagation of Christianity, be ignored; or any *rule* be laid down, to determine either its amount or its effects.

Future spread of Christianity may depend more on God's sovereignty than man's agency. Impossibility of concluding either from fact.

There is, however, still one point of too great importance to be passed over in a subject of this kind; it is this: that the *race-character* of Christianity before noticed, must needs render its administration a matter far more complicated and difficult of comprehension than if its range were

Race-character of Christianity increases the difficulty of understanding its administration.

more restricted. We have a race-Fall, a race-Redeemer, a race-Gospel, and a race-Church,—a grand *world-total*, nothing less. This is God's point of view, and we should endeavour to make it ours. But to take in *all* the measures which He deems requisite in support of his view, and to carry it out to its last great result—WORLD-SALVATION, we ought to confess our utter inability, content to detect here and there only a footprint in the circuit of his unfathomable judgments.

All great results slow in development.

Should we attempt this at all, some small aid may be found in the recollection, that the most gifted and comprehensive minds are least prone to seize on, and be satisfied with, immediate and partial results, when meditating any great enterprise. They are the least disposed to value the doctrines of *expediency*—the most grounded in their attachment to *fixed principles*, either scientific or practical —and the most content to trust and to build on them, working them out most patiently and decidedly to their final, though perhaps long-delayed, issues. They are content to proceed slowly, but surely; and to take the events that turn up in the progress of their undertakings as sure auguries of success, when the uninitiated behold them with perplexity or dismay.

May not all this be much more true of the great purpose of God with respect to the world? This purpose being of race-wide extent, contemporary with its entire existence,—looking through, and interlacing, all its intermediate epochs,—the when, the where, the how, of this stupendous project, must imply a knowledge and an application of resources identical with those that produced the race itself,

leaving far behind the collective efforts of finite beings to master the conception. What might appear expedient, or even right, as a measure of divine governance in a *restricted* field of action, might be totally inadequate, possibly totally opponent to it, in the field of the world.

Probable causes of the late appearance of Christianity in the world.

Perhaps this thought offers to us the only satisfactory solution of the long periods employed in mere *preparatory* operation, and the *late* appearance of Christianity in the world. It might have been needful not to throw back its history to a period too remote in the history of the race, and to give it a certain line of antecedents; and also a certain *contemporaneity* with the great preliminaries of the modern world.

Reference has been already made to its gentile character, to its position in the Roman empire, and to its embodiment by this means in the nations of modern Europe; thus surrounding itself with all the more advanced and hopeful conditions of civilised life as its own creations. May we not detect in this race-idea of Christianity, and the historical verification of it, the probable cause of what seems to be a mysterious preterition of many portions of the race to the present hour unblessed with the christian faith? Do we not perceive that, in a wide race-arrangement like this, questions of preference of one nation to another may present themselves to the Infinite Mind as alternatives between a present benefit to come upon a *part*, at the cost of a far larger damage entailed on other and future portions of the race? Have we not something like analogical examples of this sort furnished by the economy of Providence itself?—

of tribes and nations cast into the background of civilisation, and even apparently sacrificed by conquest or extermination, as if this were in some way or other conditional to the general weal of the race?

Election or reprobation of nations subservient to race-results.

Thus, election and reprobation, in their wider import, seem steadily to keep in view *great race-results;* and what seems to us a shadow, even the shadow of death cast over certain portions of the globe, while it implies a bright sunshine upon others, is, in fact, but an augury of a wider resplendency to come on the future of those realms. In this point of view, the long and tremendous reprobation of the seed of Abraham appears clearly, as St Paul has stated it, to be a *world-measure*, necessarily connected with world-salvation.

Judicial dispensations under Christianity race-punishments for sins against the race-remedy

In the same point of view, *judicial* dispensations, as they stand related to Christianity in the world, are to be regarded as *race-punishments;* because inflicted for sins against the *race-remedy* for sin, and for the hindrances which the world obstinately throws in the way of God's merciful purposes respecting it. 'Woe unto the world because of offences!' The Church, for instance, so far as it has failed of its mission by its corruptions and its departure from the truth, has received heavy inflictions of a judicial sort, in the absence of the Redeemer's favour, and in the loss of it primeval glory, poorly compensated by accessions of worldly consequence; while as to the outlying portions of the race, the prevalence of idolatry, speculative falsehood, and crime of every sort, which reign where Christ does not, exact a terrible retribution, not to be explained so much by a reference to the

ordinary principles of a moral administration, as by the *race-aspects of Mediation, and the collective aspect* under which God views the race so related to it.

Thus, if the creation by an Infinite Will of other wills—which not only involved the *possibility* of such wills becoming militant against itself, but even the *foresight* of this event—suggests a problem beyond the range of our faculties; we have a *second* problem of no less difficulty presented to us *in the relations and influences of race-unity* as we see them unfolded, and as God himself acts through them. Yet, as in the first our faith in his wisdom and beneficence carries us where our reason cannot; so in the latter, the same faith is required in the same attributes of our Maker, that the *race-total*, under his auspices, ensures a grander result than if the theory of human life admitted of more individuality and independence—less of the qualities and fortunes of *the mass*.

The gift of Christianity to a nation a great boon; its denial does not consign it to perdition.

It not unfrequently happens in touching on topics like these, that certain minds view the relations of Christianity to the world as involving simply its *immediately saving products*, forgetful of both the anterior and the underlying dispensations of grace which have reached the world independently of this last and all-perfect exhibition of it; and that in this point of view, *the immediate gift or denial of Christianity to a people* is merely the grant or refusal of a *great accessory boon*, not a consignment of them to perdition. But more than this, these same minds forget also, that Christianity was not intended merely to exhibit *the grace of God*, much less merely to save just *so many souls;* but to ex-

hibit the whole character and reign of God over the world in their most perfect form; and consequently, *his justice* as well as his love.

The New Testament is full of the proofs of this. Had it been God's purpose *only* to save men, the past eighteen centuries of Christianity were a very equivocal interpretation of that purpose; and the facts are much too various and broad for this end. If, to use inspired language, 'mercy and truth have gone before his face,' 'justice and judgment have been the habitation of his throne.' The Apocalypse is a much more striking commentary on the latter than on the former of these sayings. The trumpets spoken of are not those of jubilee, but those of war; nor are the vials spoken of charged with the odours of peace, but with 'the seven last plagues' in which are filled up the 'measure of the wrath of God Almighty.' But were it otherwise, it does not follow that the moral effect of judicial visitations has been lost upon the world; that they have in no important sense been tributary to the higher purposes of salvation; or that, regarding Christianity as a race-religion, we may look for a release from them in the world's future.

Judicial visitations tributary to purposes of salvation.

Nor does it follow that the world of to-day, or the existing administration of Christianity by our modern churches, is not all the more hopeful from their relation to the past, than if that past had been something different, and more in unison with our sympathies. Experience as the great rule of personal life, by no means ends there; it runs on through *national life also*, and even the broader life of the world. In all these cases, *experience* is the necessary discipline for the attainment of wisdom;

and it shows that human fortunes from one end of the scale to the other, are, though in accordance with our faculties, and by means of them, behests of divine origin. The events of a personal, or of a world story, are ruled by methods which in the retrospect, though not in the anticipation, discover the most decisive proofs of an all-comprising Wisdom, and of an all-directing Will.

Applying these remarks to the point in hand, may we not discover in the present position of the world with respect to Christianity, both a series of negative criteria drawn from the past, and a series of positive indications bearing on the future? By this time, it seems as if certain settlements had been definitely made with respect to the religious phases of the world, and that certain turning points may be observed as equally settled for its future evolutions. As to the former, the following may be taken as examples:—

Conclusions deducible from church history.

(1.) That while the great mediæval project of giving catholicity to the Church by means of a single central polity embracing all nations, must now be written as a failure, it is equally manifest that any future attempt to reconstruct such a polity, and to restore Mediævalism to its bygone glory, is an *utter impossibility;* the times and conditions of humanity necessary to such a work having passed away. It is more and more out of keeping with the habits of modern thought and aspiration, with advancing science, with the stern requirements of evidence, with the liberties of nations, and the general tendencies to discard *fixed and uncompliant institutions of every class*, but especially those of religion. Though the doomsday of Mediævalism may

Mediævalism impossible in the future.

somewhat linger, its *reproduction* on its former scale of sway is precluded.

Systems of idolatry exist, but do not progress.

(2.) The same may be said of all the residuary systems of idolatry now lingering on the face of the earth: they exist as matters of prescription and sufferance. They are not *reinforced by the younger mind of the world*, and by the wider movements now everywhere perceptible in the eastern world. Idols once broken cannot be set up again; their spell is gone, and their names fall into contempt and oblivion. Even Islamism, indebted as it is for its past wide sway to the truth it has stolen from the Bible, as well as to the military fanaticism which first struck it so deeply into the bosom of the civilised world, is a thing equally with the Papacy incapable of *reproduction:* the conditions of mind, whether social or religious, indispensable to this result, are things of the past, and seem to have vanished from the elements of the world of to-day. Its political, to say nothing of its military power, is annihilated; and the precursors of its doom, at no distant day, are found not merely in the social conditions of the countries still owning its name, but in the prevailing activity of other nations, by creed and institutions opposed to it.

The antagonism of Philosophy to the Gospel at all times, attributable to self-sufficiency.

(3.) What may be said on the aspects of the *mental and moral* history of man regarded from this point of view? From the days when as the ally of a decrepit and falling paganism, Philosophy declared war against the Gospel, to those when, as a simulated friend, it lavished all its perverse subtlety on the fabrication of heresies, and on the distraction of the Church; till, further down, it cowered at the feet of an iron Mediævalism, obsequious as a cour-

tier, or timid as a slave;—what do we see, but the traces of a principle in human nature which gave to the great primeval apostasy one of its twin phases, affecting to mount as high above the regions meted out to faith, as the superstitions which it has despised lie beneath it? In modern times, the same philosophy, by St Paul designated 'the spirit of the world,' always indicates the same tendencies, and persistently bounds to the same goal, whether it deals in barefaced blasphemies, or in the more plausible platitudes which deceive whom their bent is to destroy. Of the two classes charged with the principle of a common oppugnancy, the least dangerous, because the least mistakeable, is that which avowedly rejects the Gospel, instead of using its facts and doctrines variously distorted, in the fabrication of rival theories to be placed by the side of it.

It is hard to say in what respects modern sceptics and Bible innovators may claim even the equivocal merit of *invention* in this field; or whether they have done anything more than simply turn round and round the wheel of Ixion. At any rate, it is manifest (and this is the only point with which we profess any concern) that their enchantments give birth to no creations, save such as are quickly devoured one by another; or such as are the offspring of corruption which disports itself within its matrix for a day, then quietly subsides into the bosom of its mother, Death.

Scepticism merely negative, consequently inoperative.

As far as the 'philosophy falsely so called' which is opponent to the Gospel has yet developed, it seems proficient in no higher art than the puerile recreation of blowing bubbles. It has substantiated

no facts or truths whatever counter to those of Christianity: it has built up no system which may threaten to jeopardize its interests, much less its existence in the world. It has not ventured to put forth any catechisms or professions of faith which may challenge controversy, much less silence the advocates of Christianity. It has formed no fraternities, nor constructed any organisms for the dissemination of a positive, or transcendental doctrine, to which the world may be expected to yield adhesion. Spectre-like, it is devoid of the *tangible* qualities which, to human sense, bespeak reality; constantly fluttering on the very edge of nonentity, again and again overshadowed with the darkness of that Erebus in which it was conceived, and out of which great and deep void it in vain strives to force itself.

We have St Paul's testimony to guide us in the use we should make of a fact like this, exhibiting itself in a parallel wonderfully true to that more ancient line of human aberration to which he refers: 'For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.'[1] God was pleased in earlier times, to afford scope for this wisdom of the serpent—that its impotency might be shown to put forth the wings of its demoniacal ambition, and that it must still content itself with the dust for its burrow and food—ere he brought out his own grand measure of world-relief.

The same wisdom rules the entire administration of Christianity, and forbids us to mistake these impertinent activities of a godless speculation for

[1] 1 Cor. i. 21.

auguries of its triumph: they are rather the feats of a heady but impotent spirit, tortured by chagrin that the homage of the world is still withholden from it; while the momentary pauses in the roll of the chariot of Christianity, are but the signals of a more decisive advance, and of a more thronging retinue of applauding disciples.

Civilisation a substitute for Religion.

(4.) One more example of these *negative* judgments remains to be briefly noticed: this relates to the power and progress of *civilisation*. Up to a certain point in the world's history, and ere the administration of 'the kingdom of God' was brought to bear upon it, the powers of civilisation vested in the nature of man, and evolved by the laws of his nationalities, seem to have been the great conservative and progressive elements indigenous in the race, and antagonist to its constant tendencies toward *degenerate and abnormal states*. The centres of civilisation were always moving with the main currents of the race, and on the whole, gaining upon the wide masses of barbarism which accumulated in certain directions, chiefly in the remoter and less peopled quarters of the globe. To some extent this power was a substitute for the omnipotence of religion: it raised man to something like the true attributes of his nature, and prevented the world from sinking into a habitation of *mere crime and disorder*.

Monarchy of Religion last in Daniel's vision.

This thought may throw light upon the position given in Daniel's vision to 'the kingdom of heaven,' as that of a *supplement to, as well as a substitute for, the four great monarchies, which yield up their sceptres to it, as if their work was done*. This *order* seems to show that *Civilisation comes first as a power in the*

world—Religion last, as the complement of all other dominion; so that, if we have rightly construed the vision, the great work of world-wide civilisation has its beginning and end as a humanly developed power, in *antecedence* to the greater work of *the Church.*

Examples are sufficiently abundant in the course of general history which prove that this human power has ever had its limits, and that to a great extent it has exhibited a wave motion of recession, as well as progress. It has never wholly *kept its ground* in the earliest seats of its power, and amidst the olden monuments of its wondrous achievements. Could this be viewed apart from the *christian aspects* of modern civilisation (which it cannot), it would be difficult to make out the favourite notion *of race-progress:* certainly, the world seems approaching a period, if it has not already come, when this power shall be well nigh spent, or must, henceforth, take rank under the rule of the spreading Church. Who, for instance, can imagine that the regions of the ancient East, where still the preponderant masses of the race are found, either need, or will adopt, a *civilisation entirely alien from their own?* They are, and have been from times immemorial, *highly civilised,* and will probably borrow but little from us; while as to modern civilisation itself, though highly advanced, and still on the road to higher results, who will affirm that, as a Power, it can sustain and carry forward the present family of Europe to the highest possible results of national life? On the contrary, does not this civilisation, with all its advantages, exhibit *counter-phenomena* of a perplexing, and we might add, of a disheartening character,—

power resting on *armed force*; and the resources of science and mechanical skill turned in a direction to inspire delight only in the minds of *savages?*

The *internal* economy of these nations, though showing a favourable comparison with those of antiquity, or those outlying the pale of the Church, contains very much that offends the conceptions of the philanthropist, and the high-toned requirement of public virtue, and very much that defies all the expedients of mere *civilisation* to remedy.

As to the great transatlantic portions of the world, they have been already occupied to a large extent by European civilisation, and have little to await in this direction, unless it be the throwing off of uncongenial elements which have strangely aggregated themselves in the midst of much of better quality and higher promise.

As to Africa, its ancient civilisation has well nigh passed out of it; nor does it seem at all probable that the resources of mere civilisation, modern any more than ancient, will be able to amalgamate regions and people so difficult of access, with its more advanced types, whether in the East or West. On the contrary, Africa presents the most melancholy example in the history of the race, of outrage and despoliation, inflicted not by the savage, but by the hand of the *civilised man*— a striking monument of the barbaric ruthlessness of humanity under advanced forms of national life, when the stimulus of that cupidity which wealth and luxury engender, finds scope for its operation without let or hindrance from christian conceptions of the brotherhood of man.

On the whole, then, it may be affirmed without

Experiments in civilisation failures without the religious element.

fear of refutation, that the civilisation of the world, being the work of a power circumscribed within definite limits, and capable only of very imperfect results when found alone,—has, in the main, surceased as a *progressive power*, where it has not been, more or less, *in alliance with some form of Christianity;* and that even in these instances, as they now appear around us, its *deficiencies* are made more patent by its *accomplishments*, and what it cannot do by what it has done.

Christianity the only security against a relapse into barbarism, and for indefinite progress.

It would seem that the only security now possessed by the world against future relapses into barbarism, and the only power it holds for making good an indefinite progress, lie in the resources of 'the kingdom of God.' This does include (what cannot be affirmed of any other power) the entire weal of humanity, and the only condition universally indispensable to the most perfect development of man; while it is evident from the Scriptures, and very especially from Daniel's prophecy before alluded to, that this is the power ordained of Heaven to take to itself the nations of the world as its own domain.

Already it is taking hold of the world in a far more potent manner than when mediæval sway was at its height. It is a great *corrective* element, more or less at work in the most advanced and powerful nations; and, singular enough, it is actually at the present day undertaking, and generally unaided, the task of subduing the savage, and of exploring the remotest regions with a view to the highest social and moral effects, where the merely civilised man had before never ventured to set his foot.

These are as much *prophetic* notices of the chris-

tian future of the world as Heaven could give us by new oracles; while they show its old ones in expanding accomplishment. It is superfluous here to dwell on the fact, that the *colonizing* tendencies and necessities of nations, as they are presented in our own times, are not seen as the offshoots of pagan or mahomedan powers; nor even, to any extent, of European nations adhering to the unreformed faith. The colonizing power of the world is clearly in other hands: a truth pregnant with mighty interest to the fortunes of the Church; and, taken in connection with all its implied accessories, marking a series of *advanced posts* in its relations to the world.

Indeed, it may be affirmed, that the three great and not unrelated facts, to be interpreted decisively in favour of the spread of Christianity in the coming age, as well as in our own, are the all but completed geographical survey of the world—the mechanical and mercantile adventure by which the largest use of this survey may be made—and the constant flow of the tide of emigration from christian countries into *the unoccupied* territories of the world. To these may be added that greatest of all the motive powers of humanity—the Press, by which the mind of the world through its individual contributions is cast into a great common store, and the Scriptures themselves placed beyond all jeopardy, either as to their integrity, or their circulation.

Characteristics of the present age auspicious to the Church.

In the same direction manifestly tends *the co-operative principle* which Art and Science, together with interest and nationality, continually stimulate. The *brotherhood* of the world is by these means made

more and more a fact, instead of a bare doctrine. The quickened activity perceptible in sections of the race redundant in the restoration of its *paralysed* portions, and the intelligence which, fed from a thousand sources unknown in ancient times, not only endeavours to gauge the capacity of man and his heritage, but to draw the world into closer bonds, and to amalgamate all its various tribes to a common standard, can hardly be other than auspicious to the Church. In these characteristics of our times, we see *providential preliminaries* to something beyond and greater than the things themselves; they stand in the relation of means to an end, and that end the Church.

Nor can we account as an exception to these favourable indications, the general bearings of modern philosophy and science, because *all truth* possesses family affinities, and must *in the end* do homage to the first-born, as the sun, moon, and stars did to Joseph. Nothing is so adverse to the true weal of the human mind as *stagnancy:* it dwarfs and drivels it into childhood, and fixes society at so low an ebb, that its *recession into barbarism is an easier movement than a rise into progress.* Hence, whatever intellectual movements characterize an age, whether in a scientific, artistic, or philosophic direction, must, *on the whole*, be working for the Church, however seemingly, in some instances, adverse, though they should be doing nothing more than combating the *vis inertia* of humanity, which can breed only debility and superstition.

Truth, to a large extent, must be the product of

activity in investigation, and mental freedom its natural and useful fruit. In the process, many mistakes are, indeed, made, and errors procreated of portentous magnitude; but in the pursuits of Science, at least, the principles now adopted all tend to widen immensely the domain of truth, and to sharpen the vision of the intellect. As to Philosophy, though its course may be more difficult, and its tendencies at times ambiguous, or hostile as they respect Religion; yet that mental freedom which marks the inquiries of the present age, supplies the antidote to its own aberrations. Whenever led away by the spirit of a presumptuous dogmatism, it refuses *to charter any system of speculation* by whatever names endorsed, persistent in its efforts to supersede and annihilate every fresh aspirant to the honour of universal suffrage.

Balance of the age in favour of the truth.

On the whole, then, we may venture to assert *that the balance of the age is greatly in favour of the prospects of the Church*, though it would be presumptuous to predict in what *results* this balance may declare itself. A juster conception might, perhaps, be formed on this point, were these outstanding facts relating to the position of the Church, collated with the condition of the Church itself. Here, the signs, though not on the whole unfavourable, must yet be held to rebuke any very confident anticipations. Were we permitted, indeed, to witness *a perfectly restored and united Church on a scale commensurate with the bounds of modern Christendom*, the conversion of the world must, humanly speaking, become an event at no distant day. But we are reminded, after taking the most favourable view of its condition that facts will warrant, that as

Hindrances to the conversion of the world in the Church rather than without.

the world of to-day is what it is solely on the ground of the defection of the Church of the past, so the world of the forthcoming future may fail to be adequately retrieved by the defection of the Church of the present; and that those who come after us, may, like ourselves, be bidden to console themselves with the *prospect* rather than the fruition of the event.

How long, and in what measure, the present relations of Christianity to the world may be permitted to continue,—how long the old battle-grounds may abide as the arenas of fresh conflicts between the restorative and the destructive powers in the world;—whither, and to what extent, these may be shifted ere long, to new quarters of the world, where, as yet, these portentous forces have not displayed themselves in the intensity of combat for dominion;—what new forms of strategy may yet be held in reserve by the great adversary, to be brought out when old measures shall have proved abortive;—or when the age may come in which He that bruises the serpent's head shall either compel his withdrawal from the scene, judicially abate the *momentum* of his action, or, by the prerogative of the same sovereignty, 'pour out his Spirit upon all flesh;'—these are questions not resolvable by human sagacity, but belonging to Him who puts the times and seasons in his own power. He keeps the restored future of the world as much beyond human ken as were his great creative operations, ere the curtain was uplifted by the life-giving fiat which showed a new-made world.

While, however, expectation is fostered alike by

the Scriptures and the history of the Church, we are guarded against the presumption and fatality of *prophesying*. For, though we admit that the relative conditions of the Church and the world may be rapidly changed, to the rebuke of any dogmatism which persists in holding an all but unlimited future for the evolution of the Redeemer's kingdom, we are equally rebuked for the same dogmatism when it persists in assuring us that the Lord will make 'a short work in the earth;' and that there exists a *divine warrant* for believing that our feet are on the very threshold of the last scenes of the world's great drama.

Human agencies and time, not miracles, carry on the existing economy.

Hitherto, it seems proven that miracle is no constituent part of the existing economy, but that men, means, and time are required to carry on its administration; that to human apprehension, the great published designs of Heaven permit of being *postponed and thwarted*, though by no means *finally frustrated;* that 'the kingdom of heaven' as related to the system of the world, and embedded in it, partakes of the nature of a plot, the parts and the order of which defy all human comprehension; and that we are fain to content ourselves with a few brief notices often difficult to decipher, of its vast ramifications; the *issue of it alone* is placed beyond controversy.

To profess to have mastered this plot, is to have lost that reverential modesty which led the psalmist to say, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.'[1] This is to have reached a position to which apostles, not to say more ancient seers, were never advanced, and

[1] Psalm cxxxix. 6.

to have been favoured with such a participation in the counsels of Heaven as even 'the Son of Man,' in his *merely human capacity*, professed he had not: 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of God, neither the Son, but the Father.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CHURCH THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Its Consummation.

It were to no purpose here to insist on what has been in substance advanced before, that our knowledge of the great church future is very scanty, and that prophecy, our chief guide in this direction, is not a programme. Beacon lights on mountain tops, 'few and far between,' are meant for public signals, not for individual or family use. They imply night-time, and fade away before the presence of the rising day. St Peter says, that prophecy is thus a light shining in a 'dark place till the day dawn;' and, moreover, that the true day-star of the christian and the harbinger of church glory rises in the 'heart,' not from the outer heavens of the world, or the spheres of creature action. As to what is commonly termed the pre-millennial advent, its proofs are so slender as adduced from the Scriptures, that one cannot fail to wonder how a tenet which so entirely annuls the existing dispensation of 'the kingdom of heaven,' and leaves unfulfilled some of its broadest pledges to the Church and the world, could have maintained itself among thoughtful minds, and especially among professed students of New Testament theology. In addition to the few scriptures previously quoted, which ap-

Pre-millennial view unproved from Scripture; annuls the existing dispensation.

pear to settle conclusively the world circulation of the doctrine of the Cross, what becomes of the kindred testimonies respecting the office of the Holy Ghost? his abiding in the Church for ever? his sealing 'to the day of redemption,' which is unquestionably that of consummation? Especially, what becomes of his wider office for the world—for when he is come, he will convince *the world* of sin, and that sin the sin of unbelief not in a pre-millennial advent, but in one *already past*, and in the work of Christ founded on that advent. His 'righteousness' is spoken of as declared by his *going to the Father, not by his returning from him;* nor is the 'judgment' mentioned as one marked by the pre-millennial season, but as one already past, and bearing date from the commencement of the gospel age.

Economy of the Gospel, and the Spirit's work, perpetual.

It is, as we conceive, impossible to evade a testimony like this, since it refers to the economy of the Gospel as *then settled*, and as positively determining the nature of the Spirit's work in perpetuity. His is a work *for the world*, effectuated by the process which all experience and testimony combine to demonstrate as essentially anti-pre-millennial. All religion in the world for the last eighteen centuries has been the work of the Spirit: this work is distinct from, and supplemental to that of Christ; it is purely *administrative*, instead of being *mediational*, and implies as its basis a personal relation of the Spirit in respect to Christ and his kingdom, which, as far as we can see, must end whenever he may re-appear on the earth, just as the kingdom of the Son, when finished, returns into the hands of the Father, by whom, for special purposes, it was originated.

The personal relations of the Holy Trinity, so far as they are opened to us in the New Testament in connection with human redemption, forbid us to believe that whenever these are altered (as in both the pre-millennial and post-millennial advents must be the case), this form of administration can continue. At either season the Son as truly re-assumes the administrative functions he had assigned to the Spirit, as the Father finally re-assumes the mediational powers he had entrusted to the Son. They are parts of a very peculiar economy, one of which cannot be changed without changing the whole.

A second advent only predicted in Scripture.

Looking at the series of scripture testimonies bearing on the future advent of Christ, we profess ourselves at a loss to discover more than one such advent consentaneously declared; unless, indeed, we construe certain passages as declaring a personal advent, instead of a spiritual or a judicial one. That these, however, must be construed in the latter sense, is obvious from the fact of their palpable *non-fulfilment* as predictions of a personal advent at an early date in the christian era; while it seems as obvious that those great prophetic sections found in the gospels, especially in Matthew —some of them in a parabolic form—cannot be applied to any events *between the termination of the existing dispensation and the general judgment.*

As to the great prophetic discourse of Christ from the Mount of Olives, found in the three gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (though considerably differing in details and in phraseology), it points to two futurities, which, though widely apart from each other in time, and much more in importance, could be grouped together under the same

class of imagery, agreeably with the general style of prophecy, which, as Bacon observes, has a *germinant* fulfilment. Still we fail to perceive in this prophecy any indications of *an intermediate* judicial manifestation between the event of that age and the final catastrophe of the world's history. For, while the phrase, 'This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled,' must be held to include the events impending over the Jewish church and commonwealth; the phrase, 'Of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man,' can hardly be referred to any event short of the *finale* of the world. It would manifestly have been inappropriate to have so designated *any intermediate event* to the exclusion of this; but, understood as an answer to the question of the disciples, 'What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?'[1] it is clearly apposite.

Predictions in the apostolic writings are to the same effect.

The notices of 'the coming' scattered through the apostolic writings are to the same effect, the passages found in the second epistle of Peter very especially. In these, 'the day of the Lord' is answerable to the import of the discourses of our Lord before referred to; and when understood as the words of a man who had actually listened to these discourses, may be fairly supposed to allude to them.

The tenor of Paul's teachings is at one with those of Peter. The coming of Christ, for which he taught the churches to look, was clearly, on the one hand, the event of their gathering and consummation at the resurrection; and on the other, the signal for the general judgment, and the punish-

[1] Matt. xxiv. 3.

ment of the wicked. The only passage in the Pauline epistles which bears on its surface the form of an exception, is that in the Thessalonians,[1] where the overthrow of 'the man of sin is spoken of;' but though this coming of Christ is undeniably personal, does it needs follow that this coming is pre-millennial rather than final? For, not to dwell on the fact that all other references to this coming in these two epistles demonstrably relate to the latter—to establish this only as pre-millennial requires that the prophecy respecting the 'man of sin' be shown, either from itself, or from other scriptures, to be of *pre-millennial fulfilment*;—a task, as we apprehend it, impossible.

Passage most favouring the view of a personal reign in Rev. xx. 4.

The only prophetic text which seems explicitly to contain the doctrine of the martyr-rule of Christ on the earth, is found in Rev. xx. 4: 'And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, neither in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; for they shall be priests of God and the Lamb, and shall reign with him a thousand years.'

It is a preliminary objection to the literal interpretation of this passage, that it occurs in a book

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 8.

The predictions of the Apocalypse never simple outlines of events.

in structure entirely symbolic. It consists in a series of prophetic visions, which neither in the Old nor the New Testament are ever found as *simple outlines of events* with which anything on earth accords as a transcript. They are not to be considered in any cases as paradigms, the counterparts of which are (as the tabernacle or temple of old) humanly wrought out embodiments of divine ideas—'patterns,' as Paul says, 'of things in the heavens.' This book, while it appears to adopt portions of more ancient prophecies, is more bold than any of them in the use of metaphor; it is throughout entirely scenic; its imagery, partly earthly, partly heavenly. Original in its conception, it is dramatic in the sense of having a unity of plot, and a succession of parts regularly unfolding; yet so recondite are its teachings, that the demand for wisdom may well be made in order to scan even the outline of its scheme of events.

If, then, no plan of literal interpretation can, consistently with common sense, be adopted to expound the whole, how can it be admissible for the exposition of particular parts? If the angels, the trumpets, the vials, are all symbolic, why should this idea be dropped when other parts of the book have to be interpreted? If the woman clothed with the sun, the dragon that chased her into the wilderness, the great city Babylon mystically set forth as 'the mother of harlots,' 'the Word of God' seated on a white horse, issuing with a train of warriors from the gate of heaven to make war on the beast and the false prophet, be all mystical; why should anything that follows these descriptions be supposed to bear another character?

Mystical character of the book.

For instance, immediately preceding this verse of the resurrection of the martyrs, an angel is seen opening 'the bottomless pit,' binding Satan with a chain, and casting him into it. Is this symbolically, or literally admissible? Or, can it signify anything more or less than a *restriction* put upon his power; or its temporary withdrawal from the world, as a necessary preliminary to the universal reign of truth and righteousness? In accordance with the symbolical structure of this book, therefore, and its rule of interpretation, so far as this may be applied in the absence of events, or of a higher light, it would seem that the resurrection of the martyrs, and their judicial glory, should be interpreted *mystically and not literally;* especially, as it is not clear from the text that the whole body of martyrs is included, but *only those of a particular period of persecution*, preceding the last war of heaven, and the destruction of the beast and his emissaries.

As to the *enthronement* spoken of, it is in entire accordance both with the vision of Daniel, and the words of our Lord to his apostles, to interpret this *spiritually*, since they were never installed in the glory which his words seem to indicate; while as to Daniel's prophecy of the empire of the saints, we are bound to interpret it in the light of the New Testament, which reveals to us the spiritual reign of God.

Gratuitous nature of premillennial assumption founded on the phrase 'with Christ.'

It would seem also that the assumption of a premillennial advent of Christ founded on the phrase, 'with Christ,' is entirely gratuitous; for, in a symbolic manner, as a warrior on his charger, he is only said to appear in the last great war, and is

not said *to remain on earth to reign;* and no *judicial* advent is mentioned before the close of the chapter, and the expiration of the millennial period.

It hardly need be observed, that to reign with Christ does not, in the absence of expressions binding us to this sense, imply a visible, personal intercourse with him; for believers are said to be already 'raised together with him,' and made 'to sit together in heavenly places;' to be 'come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem;' and, in fact, into communion with the glory of the higher world. As, then, there is no evidence to show that a *personal co-regency of saints with Christ* is intended in the passage, so neither is there evidence that any but a spiritual reign, and a spiritual resurrection, are intended also.

Prophetic language is confirmatory of this view, which represents the apostasy of Israel by the valley of dry bones, and their restoration in the latter days, by the resurrection of the dead. Is it then necessary to seek further for the interpretation of prophetic language than by quoting its own precedents? and to assign any other signification to the language now before us, than that it vividly holds forth *the triumphs of the martyr-spirit* in a season of deadly persecution?—that it proved itself not only invincible by the enemy's violence and cruelty, but that it issued in a most glorious triumph, and a long and happy reign of religion on the earth?

The triumph of the martyr-spirit set forth in the vision.

And may not such a dreadful and wasting war be equal to the production of such an effect as this —a profound and holy peace on the earth, just as in the beginning of the Gospel the rush of pentecostal

energy formed the all-conquering leaders of the Cross, and at once both enraged and pacified the world? Does not this seem to be in accordance with all precedent, that God should bring good out of evil, and make the greatest crisis of religion the great turning point of its fortunes, and the inauguration of its world-wide supremacy?

In this view of the matter, the martyrs who fell in this great struggle, as well as all who preceded them in the glorious war, might be truly said to live and reign *in the issue of their sufferings*. DEAD they might not be called whose testimony and whose spirit were breathed over all lands, and who were the immediate progenitors of this new creation. In their *memory*, and in their *work*, they could not be less than immortal, or cease to reign with Christ, to whose example they were conformed, and in whose kingdom their principles and virtues flourish for ever.

Mystical interpretation indispensable in the vision of the two witnesses.

Moreover, it cannot be denied that in the vision of the two witnesses this interpretation must be adopted. Both lie slain in the streets; both revive and are translated to heaven. This *must* be mystically interpreted: why should the same interpretation fail us here? Besides, the appended declaration, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,'[1] strongly determines us in the same direction; since the reason assigned for this blessedness, that 'on such the second death hath no power,' must, if a literal interpretation be adopted, conclude against the blessedness of all who have no part in this 'first resurrection.' *On these only* 'the second death' is said to have 'no power,' from

[1] Rev. xx. 6.

which it is to be inferred that all others are obnoxious to an utter perdition; for 'the second death' is afterwards explained of being 'cast into the lake of fire.'

Hence, it would seem that we are compelled on the literal theory, to include not martyrs only in 'the first resurrection,' *but the whole body of the faithful;* which is using the passage to prove too much, and is, moreover, altogether at variance with St Paul's statement respecting the resurrection and its order: 'Christ the first-fruits; afterward'—not the martyrs, but—'those that are Christ's at his coming,'—that is, the entire body of his disciples, not a section only.

St Paul does not distinguish between the resurrection of martyrs and other believers.

The apostolic age was an age of martyrs, and St Paul himself was one of the most distinguished of them; but he nowhere separates himself and his fellow-martyrs from the body of the faithful, anticipating his and their resurrection by a thousand years. On the contrary, he always associates *himself with them*, whether martyrs or otherwise, in the general events of the Lord's coming. He upholds no distinction of this sort, but only one between the *living and the dead*, at that season. 'We that are alive and remain,' says he, 'until the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent, or go before, them that sleep:'[1] 'the dead in Christ shall rise first,'—not the martyrs, separated by an interval of a thousand years, but *only by precedence of the then living generation*, who assuredly are not to await the event of their transformation a thousand years; but only until the dead have been evoked and gathered to the Lord.

The same fact appears from the passage in the

[1] Thess. iv. 15.

Corinthians: 'Behold, I show you a mystery!' Here, again, there is no reference made to the martyrs as a separate class of saints, anticipating them by a thousand years; but as in Thessalonians, changed at 'the last trump,'—that is, after the dead are raised, the latter taking precedence over the former, but in a manner suggestive of all but a *synchronism* in their transformation, not at all dividing them *into two widely distant epochs*. Both events seem all but simultaneous, and parts of a preliminary process—not to a reign of Christ on earth, but to the final judgment.

These plain statements drawn from Scripture can hardly be made to harmonize with the literal interpretation of the text before us, and tend to the conviction, that though the mystical sense of it may not be without its difficulties as well as the literal, these can hardly be felt to hold the passage in equilibrium between the two, much less as deciding in favour of the literal. It is obvious, indeed, to rejoin in its favour, why, on the mystical theory, is this revivescence of the martyrs called the '*first* resurrection'? or, to what purpose the phrase occurs, 'the *rest* of the dead,' if no personal resurrection is intended, and no portion has in fact been extracted from the general mass of defunct humanity? A first resurrection clearly implies a *second*, and, it may be, others: a residue is a remainder after some have been taken away. But if no resurrection be intended here, why such a distinction as first and second? or why a residue, if none have been abstracted? Hence, the very propriety of language obliges us to the conclusion, that a *bodily* and not a *spiritual* resurrection of the martyrs is here predicted.

Discussion of the phrase 'First Resurrection.'

Besides, *the antithesis* in the structure of the passage is at least equally strong in favour of this view, because, if a mystical resurrection be intended in the first instance, a mystical resurrection must be intended in the second; to which what signification can be attached? If it does not refer to the *general* resurrection, to what event can it be fairly assigned?

Such, as it appears to us, is the gist of objections to the mystical view of a passage which does not admit a third interpretation. As to the first objection, it may be pertinently asked, whether 'the first resurrection' be not a scripturally warranted phrase for spiritual revival; and if so, whether this be not a sufficient answer to the objection. 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.'[1] Thus the beginning of 'the first resurrection' bears date from the days of our Lord, and may be said to co-extend with 'the day of salvation,' from that time to this. 'You hath he quickened,' said St Paul, 'who were dead in trespasses and sins.'[2] The dispensation of grace is *the regeneration*, a view which should not be lost sight of when handling such a scripture as this. So strongly prevalent was this view in the apostolic age, that a heresy was readily grafted upon it which denied the resurrection of the body, a fact not otherwise easily accounted for.

'First resurrection'—spiritual revival.

But, it may be rejoined, that granting this to be true, it is inapplicable to the case before us, because this example of the martyrs is called 'the first re-

[1] John v. 25. [2] Eph. ii. 1.

surrection,' and not the result of the entire christian dispensation. To this it is pertinent to reply, that though these martyrs were not the first, or the only examples of it, especially if the apostolic age be not included, yet it is the *first in respect to breadth and eminency*, as not merely including all the righteous blood previously shed from the foundation of the world, *but its first world-wide harvest, the first grand result of martyr-christianity*, ushering in the reign of righteousness, and the destruction of Satan's empire. All the holy seed scattered over countries and ages *are raised at once into a general harvest:* 'truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.' Was ever before any such result of holy living and holy dying seen as this? or anything like it in the days of our Lord and his apostles? And if not, may not this be properly called '*the first resurrection*'? St Paul himself asks concerning the recovery of the Jews, what shall it be but life from the dead? According to either view of this text, literal or mystical, the reign of religion is, for the season, perfect; and they are blessed who have part in it, because apostasy is then a thing unknown, and the *mixed* characters of all former ages of the Church, both within and without, are effaced: all is peace, stability, joy, holiness, during this millennial period; the children of the resurrection are all sons of God; Satan is bound and cast into hell.

If, then, on this New Testament principle we expound 'the first resurrection,' what is to be said of the second? Our Lord's words found in connection with the passage before quoted, supplies the answer: 'The hour is coming when all that are

First resurrection restoration of the soul; second, restoration of the body.

in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."[1] *This* is the *second* resurrection. The first is the restoration of the soul; the second, the restoration of the body. Of these two resurrections the Scriptures testify, *and in this order.* Passages may be accumulated in proof of this position; and that this is also the signification of the text before us, is clear from the latter declaration, that the resurrection of the body does not occur until after the expiration of the millennial period. The spiritual reign takes precedence *historically* on the earth, just as it does *individually* in every subject of a true conversion.

Hence, the notice follows of the general judgment—of the 'great white throne,' and the appearance of 'the dead, small and great,' before God. According to this interpretation, the two sections of the race represented as raised, or remaining dead, are not antithesized *in the same respects, but in conformity with the general tenor of scripture language*, which is familiarly employed to denote both spiritual and corporeal changes.

The reason of this double acceptation of language is, that both these changes belong to the same great work of redemption, and mutually imply each other. A striking instance of this sort is found in Isaiah xxvi. 14, 19: 'They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased and shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited them, and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.' The meaning is, not that these dead men shall not be raised in a bodily sense, at the last day; but that they should not *rise up again into hurtful power*—

[1] John v. 29.

that they should be so smitten by the hand of God, as never to recover their baneful ascendancy in the earth, either personally, or by their *representatives*. Thus, too, in verse 19 of the same chapter, we have the counter-side of the statement: 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead.' This description is not meant to apply to the *resurrection of the dead literally*, but in the sense analogous to that in which the wicked are said to be dead. These are the pious and martyred dead, of whom, probably, the prophet himself was one; they are said to 'dwell in the dust,' but are to awake, and to cover the earth with their multitude, as the dew of herbs, 'from the womb of the morning.' This resurrection is *spiritual*, though based on the doctrine of a *personal resurrection* separated from the former by a vast, unknown, interval.

Mystical interpretation of certain scriptures justified by the language of others.

Instances of paralogisms also occur to the same effect in the gospels:—'He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.'[1] 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'[2] or as rendered by another evangelist, 'his life?' In these passages, a *double sense* of the word life is current, of vastly different import; yet the language is left to explain itself. Thus, in the passage, 'Let the dead bury their dead,'[3] another example occurs to the same effect; so that if we should take the antithesis in the text under consideration in the mystical sense, no violence will be

[1] Matt. x. 39. [2] Matt. xvi. 26. [3] Luke ix. 60.

done either to its language or the scriptures before quoted; in fact, they fully justify this construction of the terms.

In this case, the deferred resurrection of the residue may signify the return of the corrupt ages of the world which preceded the millennial reign of piety and holiness,—a sense strongly countenanced by what follows; for Satan is again loosed, and goes forth to deceive the nations, and to gather his forces together for the destruction of 'the holy city,' and the reinstatement of his kingdom in more than its former vigour. Either sense, or both, of the prediction may be taken in consistency with the language and scope of the prophecy, since the apostasy which follows the millennial period is bounded by the judgment, and is prognostic of the condition of the race as a whole, when the general resurrection shall take place, and the great assize of Christ be holden on the earth.

The interpretation here put on such a text as this must go far to settle the question of the Saviour's pre-millennial advent; for, if the resurrection of the martyrs be not personal, *but spiritual and representative only*, there is no more reason to believe that our Lord's coming to inaugurate their reign will be personal, but spiritual and representative only. The one stands or falls with the other; at least it must be evident that a solitary text of Scripture, even if allowed to be equivocal, or construed ever so favourably to the opinion of a personal reign, cannot be a solid foundation on which to build such an expectation, *uncorroborated by testimonies from other inspired sources.*

The apostle here incorporates in his prophecy, as

is well understood, an ancient Jewish tradition, and has by this act acknowledged its truthfulness; but along with this, we must remember that he does not authenticate the tradition in the *merely Jewish sense of it*, but in strict subjection to the New Testament canon of prophetic interpretation furnished by its broad doctrinal statements; in particular, that of the purely spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom.

No personal advent before the end of the world spoken of in the New Testament.

On the whole, then, it seems there is little found in New Testament statements to incline us to the belief, that the existing administration of Christ's kingdom will be superseded until the arrival of the period ushered in by his second personal advent, and called by himself 'the end of the world.' In marked agreement with this opinion, we read the tenor of the great unfulfilled promises respecting the moral recovery of the world. This, whether relating to Jew or Gentile, is ascribed to the outpouring of the Spirit, successively, and on a scale fully adequate to this great result; but in no other respect differing from the examples found in Scripture, and in the history of the Church. The outpouring of the Spirit 'upon all flesh,' is the explicit testimony of prophecy avouched by the apostles themselves; while the measure of its fulfilment in their days, is to be regarded merely as the earnest of its world-fulfilment in 'the last times.'

The Church catholic, the distinguishing fact of the future.

If this be so, then what is to be looked for within the compass of the existing dispensation, is *the formation of a race-Church on broad evangelical principles*,—to be, not in name, but in truth, THE CHURCH CATHOLIC. The accidents of its polity, and of its outward life, are matters of little concern,

and may be passed over as things that will adjust themselves to the requirements of the world, whenever the kingdom of Christ shall have attained its true spiritual supremacy in the heart-fealty of the race.

In this simply spiritual view of the future weal of the Church, we seem to have opened to us the true import of unfulfilled predictions respecting God's ancient people, and of the kindred predictions respecting the fortunes of *Jerusalem*. With respect to the former, it does not appear that God's purposes toward the Jews, looked at in the light of the past, would require more than their conversion to Christianity, giving them an inheritance in the great spiritual theocracy of the house of David. Still, there are strong reasons for regarding their *restored nationality* as a legitimate object of christian anticipation. The Messiah, though an unseen and spiritual Lord, 'the head of all principality and power,' can hardly be supposed to withhold from his forgiven and re-accepted people this great outward badge of his favour. This, however, is substantially all that can be conceded, without a reversion to the *ancient status* of the nation, which *by the abrogation of the first covenant* is clearly made a thing of the past; and, taken in connection with the reasons of its former institution, no longer applicable either to themselves or the world. In fine, the New Covenant *under which they must be restored, in the main, rules the conditions of their restored nationality*, as well as the character of their church state; so that, while *as a church*, they may hold singular prominence in a future age, they can hold nothing like a patent of supremacy, much less

Restored nationality of the Jews a legitimate object of anticipation.

of exclusiveness. Though, as a nation, they may possess certain peculiarities, and in some respects, perhaps, *pre-eminence*, these will not by any means place them in the *status quo ante* of dwelling 'alone,' or be the least barrier to their intercourse with other nations.

Jerusalem a type of the Church, specially the restored Jewish Church.

Again, if the fortunes of Jerusalem in this evangelical aspect, be referred to, what can we read in the prophecies respecting 'the Holy City' but the fortunes of *the church catholic*, though perhaps with reserved application of the language to the church of restored Israel? Thus, the great predictions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, in particular, which so vividly portray the glory of the restored city and temple in the latter day, should be collated with the last chapters of the Apocalypse, and be as thoroughly as possible separated from all merely national and secular ideas. If, in opposition to this suggestion, they are merely made to portray materialistic scenes, and things of palpable history, even their *internal congruity* is in some instances inadmissible, and their agreement with Christianity absolutely *impossible*. The re-edification of the temple, and the restoration of its sacrifices and ceremonial,—the re-imposition of ordinances altogether national, and the centralization of religion,—must all follow after the ancient fashion, or its parody—the Popedom. The 'living waters' must be seen to arise from the foot of the altar, and to flow outward and onward with widening volume, over portions of the Holy Land, to fertilize its barren territory, and to render the Dead Sea as remarkable for its swarms of fish, as it has hitherto been for its poisoned waters.

Evangelical sense of the prophecies respecting Jerusalem.

Similar observations may be made on the latter chapters of Zechariah, which, though equally difficult with the last chapters of Ezekiel to deal with, are, nevertheless, in one important particular, more accessible to a safe interpretation, since the *evangelical* references occurring in them add no small assurance, that we are not wrong in making their fulfilment compatible with the existing church economy, and consequently with the purely spiritual character of its administration. If, as to the latter chapters of Ezekiel, we find the key to the mystery of the temple and the 'living waters,' in the evangelical doctrine of the Church and the Holy Spirit, we have also a key to the mystery of Jerusalem's beleaguerment and deliverance, as recorded by Zechariah, in the evangelical notice of the coming of the King of Zion, sitting upon the foal of an ass; in the destruction of the Shepherd by the sword of the Lord; in the opening of the fountain for 'sin and uncleanness;' and in the rescue of the prisoners by the blood of the covenant from 'the pit where there is no water.'

These, and similar expressions, are all rich in their evangelical import, and in the light which they shed upon those sections of the prophecy which otherwise, from the very character of their imagery, would lead us astray. To which we may add, that the rein must indeed be largely given to imagination and extravagance, if for a moment, under the light of these teachings, any expectation should be cherished of the literal fulfilment of these *siege scenes*, the deliverance of Jerusalem by God's visible presence, and its following eminence as the great religious capital of the world. These

graphic prophecies are but bold personifications of principles and issues purely spiritual, in perfect agreement with the poetical structure of prophecy, which is seldom to be accepted as literally descriptive of events.

It may be stated here once for all, that prophecy, from its nature, cannot be *self-interpreting;* its key must come from without, and be supplied by some express canon elsewhere found in the sacred writings, or by the course of Providence. The hieroglyphs of Egypt were wrapped in their ancient mystery till the discovery of the Rosetta Stone; and almost the entire body of Old Testament prophecy was alike inscrutable till the Man of Nazareth showed himself. The New Testament is as much *a key to the prophetic parts of the Old, as it is to the law of Moses:* it equally embodies both, and absolutely fixes the *esoteric sense* binding upon all its disciples.

The New Testament the key to the prophetic parts of the Old.

St Peter delivers himself to this effect, where he describes prophecy as the 'light shining in a dark place,'[1] out of which, however, is seen to emerge 'the day-star' to the student of prophecy regarding it in its *strictly evangelical aspects.* The view of prophecy now advocated, derives great confirmation from the fact that the New Testament, which, historically and doctrinally, is a veto on every anti-spiritual theory, nevertheless adheres, in its one prophetic book, to all the dictional peculiarities of Old Testament prophecy. The Apocalypse is even more symbolic and pictorial than any book of more ancient seers. It may be regarded as a concentrated reproduction of the series of former

The Apocalypse to be interpreted in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament.

[1] 2 Peter i. 19.

visions, extending from the apostolic age to 'the regeneration' in its most glorious sense.

It were superfluous to say, that the Christ of the gospels, and the kingdom and Church of the apostles, must rule the interpretation of a book which stands like a codicil to the last will and testament. In this it is said, that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'[1] This testimony, whether it be there restricted to the matter of the Apocalypse, or extended to the prophecies of the Old Testament, cannot be understood to include less than the *entire scope* of prophecy in the eye of the Omniscient Spirit, and the *vehicle* employed for its conveyance to us.

But this matter apart, it may suffice to point our meaning, if we recall the image of the New Jerusalem drawn out at the conclusion of the Apocalypse, as the embodiment of all the scattered images of a similar kind within the compass of the Old Testament scriptures. From this, it seems that we have nothing to do, as *Christians, with any other Jerusalem;* that this absolutely bounds our visions of the future. At the same time, we see throughout the whole of its magnificent details, nothing that can for a moment identify it with *restored Jerusalem* as a decayed city of Palestine, or with the fortunes of a people of grand ancient pre-eminence, but still a mere fraction of the human race. The Jerusalem which now absorbs our gaze is utterly devoid of any lineaments of mere earth; for she is seen to descend 'from heaven;' while her light, her colouring, and her glory, all break upon us as things of a higher

[1] Rev. xix. 10.

region strangely launched into our own. *This Jerusalem* seems set as by the compass, to the wide world, as if inviting ingression from the mighty masses that people it, free to embosom within itself all the precious elements of redemption: its broad and high wall being sternly set only against the aggressions of darkness and impurity. Temple there is none; for its vast area is all equally hallowed, and there is as little need of a spot for prescriptive worship, as there is place for a prescriptive Deity. The ideas thus presented, even if not specifically applied, are those of broad religion, broad glory, and broad salvation.

Jerusalem the Catholic Church.

This Jerusalem contains the last world of man, and the last world of God. His throne is in the midst of it, with the throne of the Lamb also. An ocean of life and bliss is poured out from this centre, pure as crystal, circumfluent, and all-vitalizing; its forests are all peopled with trees of life, and are the haunts of men and melody, their branches waving as moved by an atmosphere of praise—a current, as it were, always setting in upon the throne, as the throne breathes benediction in its fulness through all these scenes of restored humanity. Can this be understood of the Jerusalem of the Jebusites? of David's city? of the place of Solomon's glory, of Zerubbabel's patriotism, or of the exploits of the Maccabees? of Jerusalem as destroyed by the Roman, defiled by the Saracen, and finally ravaged by the Turk?

Statements in proof of the symbolic character of this city.

Certain is it, that if the Jerusalem of the Apocalypse be not typical, we cannot regard it as prophetic at all, because it is impossible that the world as it now is, can at any time, or in any place,

furnish its truthful counterpart. Indeed, it is expressly said to *descend* '*from heaven*;' and it would seem that the materials of its very extended description were selected with a view to preclude the possibility of *any feasible interpretation of it on a literal theory.*

Besides, this apocalyptic city is designated 'the Bride, the Lamb's wife'—a designation which could befit only *the post-advent Church;* and that Church *in a catholic, not in any national and sectional character.* Not only does the express teaching of Christ and his apostles, together with the primitive history of the Church, settle this point; but even the testimony of the ancient prophets may be adduced to support it: for example, the Church represented by Isaiah (chap. liv.) under the figure of the restored wife, is most certainly the *patriarchal, not the Jewish Church.* Her progeny, so surpassing in numbers those of 'the married wife' then discarded, are *Gentiles*, not Jews; and the covenant of her restoration is spoken of as 'everlasting,' a future repudiation being as absolutely precluded, as the return of 'the waters of Noah.' The return, then, to a *race-Church*, in distinction from *that of a nation*, is plainly *the truth of prophecy:* it is at once the primal idea, and the final fact of mediatorial government.

Return to a race-church, the truth of prophecy.

Perhaps, too, the union of the flocks under one Shepherd spoken of by Zechariah,—and on the literal theory, supposed to intimate the restoration of the ten tribes, together with those of Benjamin and Judah, to be incorporated hereafter in one nation,—would be more correctly understood, if regarded from the same point of view with the pro-

phecies respecting Jerusalem. For it would seem that a literal accomplishment of these prophecies would demand *more than one miracle* as indispensable even to the preliminaries of their re-nationalization as a christian people. Their existence, their genealogies, their history, as the veritable descendants of the patriarchs, must be attested in a way utterly beyond the reach of all fact and evidence *which the existing conditions of humanity can furnish;* while the strange shifts and whimsical assumptions under the guise of ethnological science, resorted to for the purpose of combating a fact so palpable, should warn us effectually against looking for the footsteps of Providence in this direction.

After all, what incongruity is chargeable upon the interpretation that makes Ephraim in this case, the representative of the Gentiles, and his union with the Jew set forth in the future Church of the Messiah?—since it is evident, that the prophecies are not a few in which *defunct nations*, such as the Egyptians, Assyrians, Philistines, and Edomites, are set forth as the antagonists of an Israel whose restoration is *yet the event of an unknown future.* If this be undeniable, why may not the Ephraim of Zechariah, uncovenanted and cast off as he was for his stubborn adherence to idolatry, be properly held up as the representative of the gentile world, for the same sin once discarded, but by the office of the Gospel and 'the election of grace,' brought into a full participation of the privileges of the last great race-Church? In this view, the two flocks have already partially, and, in the future, will collectively, *become one*—the two sticks coalesce in the hand of the same Shep-

herd, and our Lord's own words receive an illustrious accomplishment, 'there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.'[1]

National imagery of prophecy no argument for a literal interpretation.

Should it be asked, if this theory of interpretation be admitted, why a series of predictions, all clad in the language of a privileged nationality, should have been selected, so liable to be misunderstood from the extreme dissimilarity of the events foreseen, and the vehicles adopted for their expression; thus seeming almost to justify unbelief, as they seem to mock all reasonable expectancy?—it should be remembered, that, in this procedure, we mark no divergence even from *the general methods of Providence, but a striking coincidence with them;* for, undoubtedly, the chief characteristic of Providence is that of veiling from man, not merely the distant future, but even the proximate, and often the contingent results of his own actions. Properly speaking, there is nothing more than prophecy with its ambiguous dress of imagery, in the whole structure of human affairs; and but little light that enables men to make histories before events.

Relation of the Jewish Church to the Church of the future.

Besides, we should remember that the people who were made the depositaries of these great oracles of the future, were the *then* existing Church of God, and stood in a most momentous relation to the future Church of the world. It was appropriate, therefore, *to their relation and position*, to place the Church of the future before them in the aspects of *the Church of the present*, as the only representation they were capable of entertaining, and the only light which it was important for them to enjoy. To them these prophecies were to be ranked amongst the

[1] John x. 16.

mysteries of God, only susceptible of progressive development through a long series of ages, to which they only could stand beneficially related, while to a stedfast faith in their divine origin they added a patient and devout spirit, agreeably to the exhortation of the prophet to his nation: 'O house of Israel, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.'[1]

Typical history of the Jewish people adverse to a literal interpretation of prophecy.

The great truth, however, which seems to demonstrate the substantial soundness of this principle of interpretation, lies in the incontestable fact that the Jewish people, with all their attendant peculiarities of history, religion, and nationality, were strictly *a typical people.* The New Testament evidence in favour of this notion is so familiar and decisive, that it need not be here produced. The idea of *type* seems to pervade the system of their national life; their leading historic personages, whether sacred or secular: their exodus, settlement, conflicts, victories, prosperity, adversity, were all things that shadowed forth the events of a distant church future. It is, therefore, but a continuance, or working out of this fundamental idea of their polity that we find in prophecy, where *the historical basis is almost uniformly adopted as the symbol of great future events which have, in truth, no literal counterparts with the historic facts.* These are not to be *reproduced*, as the language would seem to intimate, whether they refer to individuals, or the nation at large; they are to be regarded rather as myths, or mysteries, the true signification of which must be expounded by the events themselves. In general, they refer to the times of the Messiah, and to the fortunes of

[1] Isa. ii. 5.

his Church; and looked at in this relation, are no more to be regarded in their surface structure as precursors of historic facts still to be awaited than the restoration of the temple and Jewish ritual, is to be regarded as part and parcel of a catholic Christianity; or the literal transcript into fact, of Isaiah's description of universal brute concord within the Holy Mount, 'in the last days.'

Threefold aspect of the Church. I. Its outward relations; II. Its relations to man's nature; III. Its final state.

We conclude these observations on the Church by affirming a *threefold* aspect of its history and mystery, as comprised in the Scriptures. The *first* includes its relation to the world, past, present, and to come. The *second* wings our thought into the realms of the invisible, and the spiritual of our nature. The *third* includes the final state of perfection or glory, in which these two great constituents of the Church are brought together, and for ever blended in one.

These several states of the Church, it will be observed, correspond with the nature of humanity as either actual or decreed, and are as much *developments* of that nature *personally*, as they are of the Church *collectively*. Further, of these states, two are co-existent—one only is future. The first is the race-aspect of the Church; the second extends it far beyond the limits of this notion; while the third absolutely ignores the idea of race, and places human nature in relations altogether new and final.

The first condition of the Church—that of its race-aspect—respects not merely its office for the spiritual world, to which it is initiative, but all its offices for man within the range of his present mundane relations. The Church is a necessary complement of

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Indispensability of the Church to race-development.

the institutions and influences appertaining to man *as he is*, and apart from which, his great race-powers (as demonstrated by history and experience) fail of their full development. The second but higher office of the Church, is that of training our nature for a fresh and higher life; its principles, influences, and moral mould being things of indelible impress, and the elements of a new creation, as well in the physical as in the moral sense. The relations which Religion opens between man and God are the turning points of all destiny, and the certain harbingers of its character.

The second and higher phase of the Church as distinguished from that of the race, comprises in a far larger sense than earthly language can appropriate the idea—its *catholicity*. This is not the issue of *one dispensation*, but of all—it runs back to the fountain of the race, and expands itself wide as the numerical total of the saved. Its feeding sources are more than the thousand rills of the mightiest river, or the gold grains washed down from all the auriferous strata of the world's wealthiest regions. To this Church the declaration which respected the primitive Church is more than applicable: 'The Lord added to the Church daily such as were saved.'[1]

The headship of Christ the bond of union between the higher and lower sections of the Church.

The passages which affirm the one headship of Christ over these lower and higher sections of the same Church, are decisive, though few: 'That in the fulness of the dispensation of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him.'[2] And again: 'By Him to reconcile all

[1] Acts ii. 47. [2] Eph. i. 10.

things to himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven.'[1] And again: 'Ye are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God,' 'to the general assembly and church of the first-born, written in heaven.'[2] The headship of Christ unites these separate portions of the Church, whose condition being so dissimilar, can at present have no fellowship with each other, save in the unity of their Head. This is, and must remain their sole bond, till the Church assumes its third and final form at the second coming of Christ.

In point of time, the headship of Christ was first realized by the *invisible Church* on the day of his ascension;—his headship of the *visible Church* was subsequent, bearing date from the day of Pentecost. His headship over the entire Church in the fulness of his manifested prerogative and glory, is the great future of the consummation.

The states of the Church in this catholic sense are, and must remain till then, but rudimentary and anticipative. They *imply* much more than they *reveal*, and look deep into the future for their ultimate and published significance. Numerically, as well as in the general conditions of its existence, the Church is still but in embryo; probably little more than a nucleus of its full-drawn dimensions. To our apprehension, it gathers somewhat slowly the elements of its final magnificence as ages roll on. The gold and the gems of the New Jerusalem turn up scantily, amidst the laborious workings and complicated machinery of the mundane system: nor can we imagine that an object making tributary to itself all the offices and influences of mediatorial

[1] Col. i. 20. [2] Heb. xii. 22, 23.

sway is, humanly speaking, on the eve of attainment; or, as compared with the past, to become a 'short work upon the earth.' The Church is put before us as an ever-present and determinate object of the divine counsels, bounding all finite agencies whatsoever, *as means* for carrying it into effect, as the one great issue of almighty predestination. All the results of the past are a contribution to the future of its fortunes, and the whole life of the world perpetually teems with elements and instruments for giving birth to its final glory.

Two states of the Church recognised in Scripture.

Marking here the epochs of church life and condition, we perceive but two great features scripturally recognised and mystically signified by the two stages of marriage among the Jews—*the espousals, and the nuptial ceremony.* The former constitutes the protracted and uncertain period through which the Church is now passing; the latter opens to us on 'the day of Christ.' The former is the quiet, less ostentatious, and preparatory stage of affiance, during which, by the ministry of the Gospel, and the general offices of the dispensation, individual minds are drawn into this profound alliance, which, however, breaks in upon no laws of physical or social humanity, though in reality, as *the initiative to all that follows*, it is in itself the grander fact. The latter is always announced to us as one of wonderful pomp and inconceivable sublimity, when all these slow and quiet offices of redemption for persons, at once culminate into something far beyond the utmost stretch even of imagination to picture. The aggregate or body of all these events, from the beginning to the end of the world, is suddenly brought out in a form that casts into shadow

The last, one of inconceivable splendour.

all the antecedents of creation. The *presentation* of the Church to himself, and by himself to the Father, is *the event* of even that day which numbers the Judgment among its wonders, and the recovery of a whole race from the slumber and forgetfulness of the grave to consciously indestructible life.

When it is said that 'death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed,'[1] it is implied that the array of adversaries has been long and terrible; but that all have been vanquished and dissipated, save one that for a moment keeps the field. All powers morally adverse to Christ and his Church have been already subdued; and but one foe is residuary, hitherto prevalent over all the strength and beauty of the race—the vanquisher of kings, the desolator of empires, the scourge of families, and the abhorrence of man. *He remains* to be destroyed; and with him that bondage of corruption is broken which constrained the travail and groans of the creature. And thus ends the reign of 'vanity' over man, which has made itself felt so deeply in the sphere of his pursuits, and his consciousness—far more as tainting the richest scenes of his felicity than as over-shading the scenes of his adversity and sorrow.

The triumph of the Church necessary to the recovery of the world.

It is a fact of significance, that the same book which heralds Creation as its *exordium*, shows us the Church as its *peroration*. The whole intermediate sweep of the world's history is made to pass before us concurrently with the great procedure of Redemption; yet nothing determinate and adequately glorious breaks upon us, till the world's *finale* and the consummation of the Church stand out together. After all, there is the city—built, though it might

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 26.

be, seemingly, piecemeal—drawn out in its fair proportions by the great Master Builder of the world from age to age. Of Jerusalem it was predicted, that it should be built, and its wall, in troublesome times; the trumpet, the sword, and the spear being concomitants of the working temper of a pious patriotism. It was built, yet its materials were perishable, and its glory doomed to a second overthrow. But the 'New Jerusalem' is subject to no such contingency; for its foundation, its builder, and its material, all lie without the sphere of the perishable, and equally mock the silent ravages of time and the fiercest aggressions of beleaguered foes.

Nor did Jerusalem of old, or the most renowned capitals of the ancient world, rich and splendid as they were, consist of *gold and gems*. The world was not rich enough to build one such city, much less to rear one of the dimensions specified in the last chapters of the Apocalypse. What may we learn from this, but that the whole world of human nature was but sufficient, out of which to construct *one Church;* and that all the moral treasures furnished by the entire mass of our manhood *are concentrated in this one object, as the crown of the Creation?*

Mediation a means to an end surpassing itself.

Nor are we to forget that the whole action and gist of Mediation, as we have attempted to sketch it, can only be regarded as a means to an end; and that consequently the end, when fully attained by the means, immeasurably surpasses them.

This, startling and unlikely as it may seem, when announced as an unsupported doctrine of Revelation, is in truth but one example (though immeasurably the greatest) of *the doctrine of final causes*,

in which the whole mundane economy abounds. It is a characteristic of all the known plans of Omniscience, that they look far a-head of a given stage, or stages, of almighty operation. In order to reach a final point contemplated in any one of these, often exceedingly remote, many measures have to be taken of a preparatory sort, which, if looked at by themselves, would only confuse us by their apparent complication and aimlessness; but which are, nevertheless, *strictly necessary* to certain great ultimate results. Among the untold series of what may be called pre-adamite arrangements, there are noticeable provisions for *human existence*, not merely in the dispositions of the earth's surface—such as the cooling down of its crust, the relative proportions and levels of land and water, the qualities of rocks and of soil deposits,—but in the storing up of minerals of various classes, and at various depths—all clearly anticipative of the nature and needs of our race. The same is true also of the constitution of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, with all their train of relations and influences, none of which could have been lacking without affecting, to an extent we cannot appreciate, the fortunes or the existence of man himself.

Examples in Nature and Providence.

Similar observations may be made on the history of nations. In these we see a very prodigal use of time and measures, often seemingly minute, but forming a train of causes laid with wondrous skill, and all really looking in one direction, namely, to confer on them powers for widely influencing the interests of the race.

The same may be said of *discoveries*, whether scientific or geographic, *so timed* as to suit other

movements of the race; and the appearances of *illustrious characters*, said to be 'men of their times,' but who rather made their times, or for whom the times were made.

Looking at families, and even individuals, we never mark their fortunes as mere fiats of Providence without antecedents, or as representing any other truth than that which we see in the wonderful elaborations of creative skill necessary to produce the simple effect which we call *life*, or the kindred contrivances lavished on the structure of a tree, all looking to the simple effect of its *fruit*.

In a word, the grand ideal of Creation and Providence,—that of means and ends indefinitely replicated from a system to an atom, and from a race to a man,—is here seen in the *relations of the world to the Church. The world was the necessary outlay for the production of the Church*,—the world passes into it, and is absorbed by it. The *rationale* of their existence stands thus: *the world for the Church—the Church for God.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CHURCH.

Its Glory.

The church headship of Christ the final cause of race-existence.

The preceding discussions brought down to this point are designed to show that the Church, in the widest New Testament acceptation of the term, is the scope of all mediatorial operation, which closes whenever this object shall have been attained. The church headship of Christ is the inlying power with respect to all beyond itself—the throne of all things. It imports supremacy specially directed. All agency thence issuing returns thither for the aggrandisement of this object, however complex may be its methods, or long the process through which this is protracted. Thus the doctrine before us is the disclosure of the *final cause* of all existence whatsoever, but especially of the world and the human race. This mystery is great, but yet may only argue the profound reach of the truth itself. To a superficial reason it may seem like placing a cone on its point, or like a vast machinery set up and kept working for insignificant results; but to a devoutly prying spirit this may augur only human ignorance and presumption, framing foregone conclusions, instead of learning wisdom by the study of revealed facts. It may be that the Church is worthy of all this expended agency; that it is the

gem not of only the world, but of the universe; and that neither the one nor the other had been perfect without it.

This doctrine of the supremacy of the Church under Christ, and the subordination of all things to the purpose of working out this supremacy, is not more obscure or inconceivable than that all terrene things tend to the weal of the human race; or that evil, under the government of a Being infinitely wise and good, must be meant to subserve this end. But however this may be, nothing short of our statement can be meant by the apostolic declaration, that Christ is 'the head over all things to the Church.'

Bearing of this doctrine on church destiny.

This supremacy of the Church, sub-mediationally considered, must imply its correlative supremacy viewed post-mediationally. The one view settles the other. In the former, the Church, in its visible and earthly estate, is instrumental in accomplishing its higher destiny, and may be regarded as an end to itself. In the latter, the Church is to be looked at directly in relation to its Author, and as presenting in a form definite and final, the great issue of his personal relations to the universe.

When St Peter refers to the things written by St Paul, 'according to the wisdom given unto him,' we may not misapprehend him by ranking amongst these the great topics of mediatorial rule, gentile election, and the mystery of the Church. To the last of these it is proposed now to turn.

The Church the body of Christ.

In St Paul's writings the Church is often and very emphatically represented as 'the body of Christ.' The passages in which this word body occurs are scattered through four of his epistles; viz., those to

the Romans, the Corinthians (first), the Ephesians, and the Colossians. Thus: 'We being many, are said to be one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.' Again, Christians are said to be called 'to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.' Again, by one Spirit they are said to be all 'baptized into one body.' The Church is 'his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' 'He is the head of the body, the Church.' The afflictions of Paul are afflictions of Christ for 'his body's sake, which is the Church.' We have the phrases, 'He is the Saviour of the body,' 'the body of Christ,' and 'the whole body.' In two instances, Paul describes this body by a series of allusions to the human body as its anatomy was understood in those days, and in terms not inapplicable even to advanced science.

Thus it appears that this doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ is pre-eminently a Pauline doctrine: it occurs nowhere in the New Testament but in his writings; and though not to be understood as peculiar to this apostle to the exclusion of the rest, there can be little doubt that it was a branch of 'the wisdom given unto him,' in a very distinguished measure. Indeed, we are very mainly to understand this doctrine as included in the phrase, 'My knowledge of the mystery of Christ' (Eph. iii. 4); while it is obvious that the term mystery as it occurs in this same epistle, and also in that to the Colossians, is very pregnant with this same meaning. They are all resolvable into the relation between Christ and the Church as represented by the head and the body. Strictly speaking, there are but two gospel mysteries—that of

the Incarnation, and that of the Church. These are obviously resolvable into one as the beginning and end of church existence. To this effect St Paul declares himself, when, interpreting marriage as a symbol, he says, 'This is a great mystery; but I speak as concerning Christ and the Church.'[1]

The term applied and interpreted.

As, then, this doctrine of 'the body' is the great mystery of St Paul's gospel, accounted by him its riches and its glory; it must be understood as applied to the Church in the most recondite and spiritual sense—not merely, or chiefly, *as a polity, or a visible society*, except as these are expressions of this more profound and comprehensive truth.

The term 'body' thus interpreted, signifies an essential yet antithetic unity;—vital dependence and intercommunion—mutual personal consciousness; relative proportionateness; and catholic fellowship. These are the leading ideas belonging to the figure. But without dwelling on them separately, attention may rather be given to the doctrines arising out of them.

This mystery taught by Christ.

(1.) The mystery of 'the body' is thus declared to be the advanced, and, indeed, the sublimest, doctrine of Redemption;—the *last* in God's order or purpose, as St Paul calls it, it is *first* in his plan of Redemption, and in all his operations in this direction. Our Lord's profounder phraseology, as recorded by John, implies, though it does not express, this doctrine of 'the body.' Phrases such as these are in point: 'Those whom thou hast given me;' 'As many as thou hast given him;' 'The Father that gave them me,' etc. These are all expressions founded on relation, unity, corre-

[1] Eph. v. 32.

spondence, personality; in fact, just what is meant by the doctrine of 'the body:' they are given with a view to complete this purpose, *i.e.*, the formation of 'the body.' Hence, the significant correspondence of Christ's language at other times with this: 'Abide in me, and I in you;—ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you;—I in them, and thou in me,' etc. This language is all anticipative of the apostolic doctrine of 'the body,' and of no other. As a final proof of this, two examples may be added, taken from John vi. and xv. The entire discourse of Christ in the synagogue at Capernaum, in which he declares himself 'the bread that came down from heaven,' is founded on this doctrine; for it sets forth the sublime truth of the mystical incorporation of his people with *himself*—vital and everlasting: 'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' This is the doctrine of 'the body.'

The parable of the vine and its branches is manifestly to be interpreted by the same truth. Vital union, perennial vigour, beauty, fruitfulness, as appertaining to the relation of the vine with its branches, strikingly set forth the doctrine of 'the body,'—*then* not ripe for final development, but awaiting the last illuminations of the Holy Ghost.

Symbolized in the Supper.

It may be added that the ordinance of the Supper as instituted by Christ, and described by St Paul, thoroughly accords with this view. The bread and the cup, first declared by Christ to represent his body and blood, and by St Paul to be a mode of communion with the Saviour, are best understood by keeping in view the doctrine of 'the body.'

The elements in this association symbolize the doctrine of *communion with the entire nature of Christ by means of his sacrifice*, individually and collectively participated. The acts of eating and drinking are, in this case, purely symbolical of the deeper truth of mystical communion between him and his members, severally and universally: in a very subordinate sense only are they *commemorative*. The two facts thus set forth are these: the individual incorporation of believers with Christ as 'Head of the body,' and their collective oneness as his members; —in a word, the ordinance typically sets forth the doctrine of 'the body.'

Hence Paul's style of writing, in this respect, so true to the formula of our Lord's own teaching. The phrase, being 'in Christ,' and others expressive of communion with him, abound in his epistles. This cast of language, so characteristic of his writings, shows how entirely he was possessed by this great master-truth of Christianity—'the body.'

Personal election into the body mystical.

(2.) From this supreme view of Redemption it is obvious that this apostle drew his doctrine of 'election' in its personal aspect. For instance, the grand doctrinal opening of the Ephesians is founded on it: 'According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,' etc.—*i.e.*, as we understand it, chosen us to the fellowship of his Son as head of the body, or aggregate of glorified men. This is the ground or object of this great grace of 'election;' and all 'spiritual blessings' are, accordingly, made to flow from it—remission of sins, adoption, evangelical knowledge, the gift of the Spirit, and the inheritance. All these are ruled by this 'purpose,' or 'mystery;' they presuppose it, and are,

in fact, the necessary preliminaries for carrying it into effect.

Thus, none of the blessings of Redemption are apostolically viewed apart, or in the abstract: no, nor even as self-terminative. They are but means to an end. We are redeemed from certain evils unto certain conditions of acceptance and blessedness by these gifts of grace; but they are only in order to something higher than them all—*i.e.*, to the fellowship of Christ as 'the Beloved,' from whom Redemption flows. We must keep this in view, if we would understand the remarkable passage in Ephesians (chap. iii. 16), which evidently exhibits the *body view* as the eminence whence may be taken in the true dimensions of the great evangelical mystery—'the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.' Thence alone is seen the utmost range of the true land of promise; and from no lower point than this Pisgah, or spiritual climax, can a glimpse be had of the final glories of church redemption.

The relation of church election to the mystical body.

(3.) This doctrine of 'the body' also rules 'election' in its broader or church aspects. For example, it determines the catholic nature of the Gospel itself; a nation or section of the human race merely, being entirely inadequate to the breadth of the divine purpose respecting the Church: nothing less than the world of men was required to furnish the elements of this grand aggregate or body—the family, as the apostle calls it, named of God 'in heaven and earth.'

This doctrine rules also the character of the Church *as a society* existing in the world, since it is plain that to be in harmony with His purpose as to 'the body,' it must consist of congenial ele-

ments, or it would traverse the very law of its existence.

Church privileges and fellowship flow from the doctrine of 'the body.'

The doctrine of 'the body' rules the honours and privileges of the Church in its *visible* capacity: its members are 'fellow-citizens;' they are a household or family—a temple—a priesthood, only in *a relative and prospective sense.* These are the projected shadows of a celestial and eternal excellency, really co-existent with the conditions of earthly life, but *derived* from their higher reserved destiny.

This law of 'the body' rules the fellowship of its members: they are 'members one of another.' Hence, the law of mutual dependence as truly obtains in the body spiritual as it does in the body natural,—a truth only reflected, and that dimly, in the union and mutual subserviency of their outward church life. The mystical incorporation of the community of believers, in truth, rules the offices and duties of church polity, as well as the sympathies and the demeanour of Christians toward each other in the present state. All motives for the prevention of schism, and the cultivation of christian virtue as it bears upon the offices of life, flow from this great inner sanctuary—this mystery of their oneness in Christ. These catholic principles in the truest sense, both as applied to forms of communion, and the affairs of every-day life, are the translated laws of 'the body,' which can never be abrogated, and which are necessary not only to the honour and the prevalency of Christianity in the world, but to its *perfection hereafter* as the one moral spectacle of the universe.

All the saved, members of 'the body.'

Hence, no salvation can be realized apart from the rule of this grand ideal. The 'body' concep-

tion translates itself by an eternal behest of the Head, into every instance of recovered manhood, not suffering so much as one abnormal type to exist in any age or dispensation. We might as well imagine 'eternal life' to flow from another source than Christ, as 'eternal life' to flow from him in any other capacity than as the 'Saviour of the body.'

In this point of view, gifts, offices, and spiritual acquisitions, as found in the 'body' in its earthly state, are but notices of distinctive relations within it, in its last and *perfected form;* so that the notion of membership in a body like this opens to us thoughts of individual importance, honour, and felicity, stretching immeasurably further than any *unrelated life*, or even related kinds of life which might be otherwise possible. By this means, every individual has an interest in the whole 'body,' and the weight of its glory is made to rest on each; while each returns his contribution to its aggrandisement. Even under our dim light, such a combination of redeemed men, every one of whom is made relatively as well as personally perfect, suggests to us something that may be widely different, and as far removed in excellency as in difference, from any other order of existence,—something absolutely peculiar, though not isolated, and destined to show a glory of its own—and this glory the universe complement of God.

Race-unity fundamental to the doctrine of 'the body.'

It would seem, on such a showing, that the two facts fundamental to the existence of 'the body' must entirely limit it to its revealed aspects,—namely, the *race-character of man, and the Incarnation.*

It is hard to conceive of such an aggregate as this formed by beings otherwise related than by *race*—by a *first nature indefinitely multiplied in individuals;* thus preserving with its original type, a perfect unity, however extended, and on the surface, varied. Certain it is, that this race-unity lies at the basis of all the plans of Providence relative to humanity, and of all the phases of its development. The evangelic idea, therefore, now dwelt upon, is, like many others, but a higher application of one that ramifies throughout the nature and history of man; and is another example of the truth found in Ecclesiastes: 'God requireth that which is past.' The idea of race-life is manifestly transferred to the sphere of man's *higher destiny*, and sheds its lustre over the eternal future of his perfected life, agreeably to our Lord's own vast aspirations for 'his body' to the Father,—'that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.'[1]

This doctrine throws its own light on the heaven of the saints,—it is *the heaven of society*, of *human society*. In truth, the heaven of man in this view, is MAN.

The humanity of Christ essential to his headship of 'the body.'

The same fact of peculiarity as to 'the body,' is established by the Incarnation, the human headship being plainly indispensable to its formation. In no other way conceivable to us, could a glorified embodiment of man in God be possible. The bond between the two natures must be a common one, or the cohesion of such a 'body' with such a 'head' is devoid of its feasible condition. Of course, the infinitely greater mystery lies in this nexus being

[1] John xvii. 21.

possible; but granting this, the second fact becomes not only to our apprehensions possible, but an easy and adequate result. Without *divinity*, the highest type of human headship would have been infinitely below the requisites for such a result; which, in truth, is the highest form of life, together with its highest laws, and its highest form of felicity. But on the other hand, MANHOOD, FEDERALISM, ATONEMENT, and a communicable type of life answerable to the capacity of the being to be restored and elevated, were powers no less necessary to the person assuming this wonderful office of headship toward 'the body.'

The relations of other beings to God, natural; man's, personal.

It may be more difficult to offer any satisfactory explanation of the notion now stated than it is intuitively to grasp its certainty. However, it may be put thus: the relations of Deity to creatures other, and it may be in some respects much higher, than man, may be regarded as simply *normal;* that is, they are correlations with the divine nature and attributes, *simply as such;* and they rest on Deity as the First Cause: they do not imply *corresponding personal relations, or the higher grace of personal manifestations.* There may be, and probably are, moral beings far below us in the scale of existence, just moving in the light of moral infancy; and, it may be, they will never require the higher manifestations of God, especially such as are assigned to man.

In New Testament theology, *everything turns upon the superadded relation of God to the creature, by God himself becoming a creature;*—an advanced manifestation this, which forbids all finite intellect to measure it, and which undoubtedly opens a new epoch in the divine government. 'The Word was made

flesh, and dwelt among us.'[1] 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'[2] 'The seed of David according to the flesh' is 'over all, God blessed for ever.'[3] In *Theism* the attributes are everything—in the *Gospel*, the PERSON.

The theocracy a shadow of 'the body.'

The shadow of this great New Testament mystery of 'the body' is more or less projected over the entire Old Testament, but it is especially visible in portions of the prophetic writings. The *theocracy* was its general type; while the declarations which respect it in the prophetic writings, render this still more apparent. Notwithstanding this, it cannot be said that the Old Testament reveals the doctrine of the 'body,' though it does reveal the rudiment of most of the leading articles of New Testament theology. Nowhere either in the law or the prophets does the word body occur in any such sense as St Paul uses it. The ancient Israel are frequently designated by the Lord as his people, his inheritance, his vineyard, or his flock, but never 'his body.' This is altogether an apostolic, nay, a *Pauline* term; and there are ample reasons why it is found here and not elsewhere.

The apostolic doctrine of the mystery of marriage.

This view of the mystery of Christ and the Church is corroborated by the apostolic doctrine of the 'mystery' of marriage, in addition to the proof supplied by the apostolic doctrine of 'the body.' The references abounding in the Old Testament to marriage as significant of other and wider relations than the union of a human pair, are indicative of something *mystical* by divine intention in the institute itself. Not to specify instances in the prophetic writings, what can be made, on any other theory, of

[1] John i. 14. [2] Col. ii. 9. [3] Rom. ix. 5.

the 'Song of Songs, which is Solomon's'? Either its inspiration must be abandoned, or 'the mystery' must be acknowledged. Moreover, the transmitted particulars of the original institute strongly lean to the apostolic interpretation. Like every other truth of revelation, the brighter evidence is the last, and the perfect form of the truth is the evangelic.

Indicated in the facts of creation.

Glancing at the institution itself, we can hardly avoid perceiving the dim outline of the higher truth or mystery couched in it; for no satisfactory reason can be drawn from it for the creation of the man *first*, and then the creation of the woman *out of the man*, if we preclude the ulterior view of these facts, and confine our regards entirely to their aspects on the race-character of man. For ought we can see to the contrary, the origin of the human race might not have differed at all from that of the inferior creatures, which undoubtedly were formed contemporaneously male and female, as we should judge both from the law of transmitted life open to our observation, as well as from the face of the inspired narrative. A man and a woman contemporaneously and independently formed, and afterwards united as they are now, would seem to have answered the purpose of human transmission and human society just as well as the very peculiar method adopted. The contrary account to this, being, to our apprehension, so far fetched, is no inconsiderable argument for regarding it as a divinely revealed fact. Not that these considerations render us insensible to the bearings of the institute as founded on these singular facts of human origin, namely, the sanctity of marriage, and its consequent influence on the welfare of society. Polygamy and

divorce are both equal violations of the institute grounded on the eternal law of human origin. But we fail to see how, practically, this holy and beautiful law is enforced by this reason. It is generally lost sight of, and certainly exerts no perceptible influence in the formation of marriage contracts, which, as it seems, may be, and are, maintained on other and more palpable grounds.

But if the most is made of these in their application to the weal of society, we by no means weaken the argument in favour of *the mystery* of marriage, since we find plentiful examples in Scripture of the same fact, fraught with complex significations, and typical of events remotely related, both as to time and character. The Passover bears in it more than the memorial of a great national rescue; it shadows forth the redemption of the world—*this is its mystery;* while, as to the Sabbath, its meaning is gloriously cumulative—it has both a past and a future, a national and a world aspect. It is no less spiritual and individual than it is social—a memento of a world made, and a world recovered—the pledge of a millennial jubilee, and finally, of heaven itself.

Adam the source of the earthly—Christ, of the heavenly life.

But what is the mystery of marriage? St Paul says that it is 'Christ and the Church'—the second man made answerable to the first; in both cases, the type and means of very extended successional life, the depositary of all the powers of race-existence finally aggregated into a magnificent whole. This is the leading phase of the mystery. But the first man becomes a *dual personage* by the formation out of himself of the feminine type of life. *The nature is still one*, though personally divided—*divided*

in order to be re-united; and this in order to be made capable of the perpetuated reproduction of the nature in pairs, to be successionally *re-united after the first model*, so as to 'replenish the earth and to subdue it.'[1]

The second man, as man, contains in himself all the powers of the primitive manhood in the higher antitypal sense. Here, however, the fact and the mystery diverge. The bride is a mystical person, not after nature's order. The sleep of Adam might, and probably did, shadow forth the mystery of the Cross, and the issue of the bridal form from that hour of darkness, and the soldier's spear which brought forth 'both blood and water.' This was the mystery of her creation who was to be another self to 'the Son of Man;' to reflect his image, and to engross and to return his love for ever.

The great mystery, the oneness of nature between Christ and his Church.

In this relation of the fact to the mystery, St Paul quotes the address of Adam to his new-formed bride, inspired as he was with the full consciousness of her origin: 'Thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh;'—translating it thus, 'We are members of his body, of his bone, and of his flesh.'[2]

Waving the application of this 'great mystery' to spiritual edification, let us say that marriage and its mystery lie in this—oneness of nature issuing in derived life, with all its train of relations and affections; perfect sympathy and intimate communion; the holiest rule and the most complacent subjection. Man is the image of God—woman the image of man—the Church the image of Christ.

[1] Gen. i. 28. [2] Eph. v. 30.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CHURCH.

Its Glory.

The pleroma.

THE gnostic fancies handed down to us respecting the 'pleroma' or fulness, and even observations on the critical shades of the word's acceptation, may be here passed by. The gist of its service as a vehicle for our doctrine, will be best ascertained by the selection of a few scripture examples of its use, which, it will be seen, are singularly consonant with each other, and illustrative of its meaning in the present instance.

The verb from which pleroma is derived is constantly employed in the New Testament to signify the accomplishment of prophecies, or to mark events as facts accomplished.

Examples of its use.

A few instances only are selected—Matthew i. 22, ii. 15, 23, xiii. 35. The first three examples relate to the fulfilment of prophecies respecting the birth and history of Jesus; and the following to the fulfilment of the historical prophecy of the 78th Psalm by the parabolic ministry of Christ. With regard to the first three, the events of the incarnation, the return of the infant Christ from Egypt, and the ignominy that should attach to him as a Nazarene, are the declared fulfilments of prophecies. In short, these

events were, severally considered, the *pleroma* in the sense of being exactly answerable to the divine foresight and intention, whatever *surface* views might suggest to the contrary. If we turn also to Matthew xiii. 35, what in Psalm lxxviii. appears to be only an historical digest adapted, like the song of Moses, to devotional uses, becomes, under the light of New Testament inspiration, a prophecy of the typical class, declared to have had its accomplishment in the character and issue of our Lord's ministry,—this was its *pleroma*. To add but another example; the prophecies which foretold the sufferings of Christ, particularly those of Isaiah liii. and Zechariah xiii., are repeatedly declared by our Lord himself to require his death for their verification. Again and again he says the Scripture, or the Scriptures, 'must be fulfilled,' and that, therefore, 'it must be'—that 'thus it is written,' and 'thus it behoved Christ to suffer;' in a word, that his sufferings and death were the *pleroma* of all this class of scriptures.

Thus we learn that the 'pleroma' always implies an event which comes to pass in exact accordance with a programme or decree of God; and that, consequently, the 'pleroma' exhibits his wisdom and his will carried into full effect—an effect in all respects answerable to his ideal.

The same may be said of all that class of expressions which relate to the *order* of events, and not only to the events themselves, as divinely pre-determined. The time is fulfilled, said Jesus; 'When the fulness of the time was come,' said St Paul; and, 'the dispensation of the fulness of times.' In these instances, the 'pleroma' signifies an exactly

computed measure of time, on the expiration of which, certain events are due in God's order, and are made to issue from this *pleroma* as its mature birth.

The application, then, of the word pleroma is so thoroughly settled by scripture use, that its meaning in the instance before us cannot be doubtful. This meaning is one, but to be viewed under a *double* aspect. First, the Church is the 'pleroma' as being the fact accomplished or issue of all redeeming plan or operation; and secondly, as being the climax or *finale* in the manifestations of Christ and Deity to the universe.

The 'pleroma' of Christ the perfected Church.

Thus the 'pleroma' of Christ must be *his perfected Church:* the term is not applicable to it in its earthly condition, or in its transitive stages, but solely to its state of *ultimate completeness*, when it shall have become thoroughly answerable to the divine ideal. This is St Paul's teaching in the very chapter from which the expression is taken—'That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven, even in him.' Numerical aggregate—relative disposition—individual perfection of nature, together with catholic sympathy, fellowship, and unity everlasting—in short, every creature attribute, whether personal or social, freed from every trace of imperfection and limitation, sublimated by correspondence with the glory of its Head—belong to this *pleroma* of Christ. This is the issue or birth of every antecedent purpose, season, event, and agency comprised in the creation and redemption of man—of the career of Mediation, and its consummation in the

resurrection, the judgment, and the glory of heaven. In this sense, then, the Church is 'the fulness of him who filleth all in all.'

The pleroma indicates the rank of the Church, the Body, the Bride.

The second phase of the *pleroma* understood of the perfected Church, is the *rank* which it indicates for the Church in respect to the universe, and on the ground of its being *a personal complement to Christ himself*. The two figures of the body and marriage previously discussed, are intended to adumbrate this pre-eminency. The head and the body comprise the full or perfect man; their perfection is *relative*, dependent on their union—it is destroyed by severance and solitude. Marriage, again, constitutes the full or perfect man. The divine *race-programme* necessitated that human beings should live in pairs, not in solitude. The unit implied a duplicate, or its nature must have been altered: Society would have been impossible, and with that impossibility, Humanity itself. Affections imply objects beyond themselves; they imply reciprocation: and thus the complement or *pleroma* of life is realized.

Thus, redemption by Christ, the union of man's nature with himself, and his atonement together with his ascension and supreme dominion, glorious as these things are, were yet not *his pleroma:* this flows from his affiance of humanity—the mass of redeemed men. This union comprises, as it were, *his other self*, and an object sufficiently great for even his personal affection and delight. This was his programme, or rather, the wonderful image of creature endearment and glory which possessed his soul; this was 'the joy set before him' during his earthly travail, and even in his glorified form. Hence the tender and noble language of St Paul:

'Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might *present it to himself* a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.'[1]

It suggests personal completeness.

This second sense of the 'pleroma' is also established by the consideration that in the passage before quoted it stands as exegetic of 'the body,' clearly directing us to the notion of a *personal completeness* as accruing to Christ from his union with 'the body;' or else what can be the meaning of the sublime periphrasis, 'Him that filleth all in all'?

The word, then, indubitably refers to such a personal completeness as exists by the union of 'the head' with 'the body.' This sense is further corroborated by the *antithesis* intended between this 'fulness' ascribed to Christ, and the fact that 'He filleth all in all;' since, if no antithesis were intended, the force of its meaning is wonderfully abated—in fact, sinks almost into a truism: for the Church is then but an example (though a pre-eminent one) of a doctrine broad as the universe. He fills the Church as he fills all other creatures—a statement, in this connection, if not feeble, certainly not climacteric. The meaning, as shown by this antithesis, is, that he who is the supreme and all-replenishing Deity to the Universe, is himself *filled or completed by his connection with the Church.*

To be understood of Christ as God-man.

It need hardly be said that this explanation would lack both reason and piety, if it respected *Christ in the same sense*, since 'he that fills all in all' must be incapable of any addition from his

[1] Eph. v. 25–27.

creatures; but it is in this instance to be understood *solely of our Lord's headship of 'the body,'*— that is, of his person as God-man, and its official relation to the aggregate of redeemed men. In this sense it may be just as true that the Church is his 'fulness,' as it is that he fills the universe. In fact, the one truth derives all its grandeur from the other. The truth here announced is, indeed, self-evident, because the formation of the Church is to be regarded as the great object of the Incarnation and the Mediatorial office; and merely implies, therefore, that this object is in every respect worthy of Christ's person and office.

Headship is a relative term: even in the political sense of sovereignty, it implies subjects, or it is an empty title. Paternity implies filiation; master implies servant; and teacher, the taught; as cause also implies effect. Thus, the Christ implies the Church, as the Church implies the Christ. Hence, he is not full or complete without it. THE CHURCH IS THE COUNTERPART OF HIMSELF.

The 'pleroma' or fulness, thus understood, suggests several ulterior views of Christ's supremacy in this relation, and aids us in settling some great questions respecting the ultimate universe-form of his church manifestation. The 'pleroma' leads us to compare the mutual relation between Christ and the Church which it signifies with the anterior and rudimental relations existing between him as the Creator, and man in his primitive condition. Had there been 'fulness' granted in the first instance (which is but another word for completeness or perfection) to the human nature and its race-powers, so that no advance beyond that status was

Man made only initially perfect.

either possible in itself, or in accordance with the Creator's purpose, it is plain that no church status on the New Testament hypothesis would have been feasible. 'Fulness' is *development*, not germ—manhood, not infancy. But the inspired history, and indeed all other, shows us that Creation did not by its mere fiat confer this fulness,—it was a rudiment, a beginning only. The human nature was in its incipiency; its constitution was in all respects framed with a view to an ultimate and far distant goal—not at once to realize the highest pitch of its existence. Had the first man retained his headship with his innocency, unimpaired,—and had his personal immortality linked him with every generation of his descendants,—*relatively*, they would have been *his body and his fulness;* but in a sense immeasurably inferior to that belonging to Christ and the Church. 'The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such also are they that are heavenly.'[1] The 'fulness' to be respectively affirmed of these, is based on the *natures* respectively embodied, and must therefore stand immeasurably apart.

The unfilled condition of human nature as fallen.

The great fundamental fact of Revelation, the early and entire apostasy of man, is demonstrative of the *unfilled* condition of his nature. He was morally mutable, temptable, subvertible. He failed under the test applied to him; and it is a fact of terrible moment, that no human being except the man Christ Jesus, ever passed the ordeal prescribed by the primitive moral *regime*, unscathed. Man,

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48.

like some gorgeous and fragrant flower, was quickly broken, and swept away by a hurricane blast: or like a palace, or a temple of the goodliest structure, and enriched with all the treasures of the world, defiled and desolated as soon as reared. Whatever endowments had been conferred, were recalled: nor was there any provision in the existing constitution of things for his recovery. All the facts of race-experience, from that day to this, attest the *vacuity*, not the 'fulness' of man; and that no empire, either morally grand or federally complete, even answerably to the ideas or aspirations of man himself, can ever be reared out of human nature as it is. Generally, his is a condition which desiderates help, without knowing where to look for it, and which travails with the birth-throes of 'vanity;' even if, intellectually and socially considered, he may be said slowly and staggeringly to advance (morally, this is far more equivocal); while in the *individual* sense, the very laws of existence as they now operate, make this absolutely impossible.

Christ bestows his own fulness.

If, then, even the status of innocency, and the unmarred gifts of creation, could but have entailed on man a 'fulness' proportionate to his archetype, what must be said of his degenerate condition, by which he is put immeasurably back of this outsetting of his race? Is it possible he should ever overtake the distance of this rearward position, much less stride a-head of it? Plainly, then, a new head and a new body are indispensable arrangements, both to the recovery of the *status quo* and the last goal of race-existence. The head who stands scripturally in the relation of an antitype to Adam himself, and the body to be formed *out* of,

not *of* his race, comprise all 'the possible of fulness or perfection. All the treasures of his incomparable Person appertain to the Church by communion of nature and the behests of sovereignty. Nor is it difficult to perceive that the sovereignty which rears, sways, and consummates such an embodiment of man as this, is as superior to that which initiated his existence, as this final form of it is in advance of the first. In the first example, man was indeed his workmanship, but not 'his body'—his creature, but not his bride.

As yet we see only the means, not the end.

Then, as to race-history under Mediation, this has its processes of recovery—strange, alternating, and incomprehensibly tardy. Its measures are all-wise, but complicated; its agencies omnipotent, yet allowing of counter-will; its plot sublime, but wrapped in darkness; as yet, outpeering but in indistinct intimations of its embosomed glories. Plainly, there is as yet no 'fulness' in it, no notices of the *finale*—all is transitive and seemingly chaotic. Sin retains its race-blighting malignity; and the iron rule of Satan is felt wherever man is, in the perversion of his nature, and the throbbing of every pulse of this vast aggregate of man, eagerly bent on crime and ruin! The law of mortality is not less exacting than of yore; and the vanity and sorrows that press upon the heart of the world, not less burdensome than when the first outcasts left the garden. Even Religion holds no charter of immunity from vicissitude, nor the Church any antidote against corruption. The wise and good die, and disappear, 'like the beasts that perish;' and death and hell have not yet said 'We are full.'

Nor, if this state of things were altogether altered,

have we in mediational sway, however stupendous, anything more than *an arrangement of means to an end;* nor, when this has done its work, have we anything more than the *most perfect conditions of existence furnished—not the 'fulness' of that existence.*

Church aspect of the universe.

The very greatness of the means employed to bring about the one result of the consummated union of Christ and the Church, shows how far all these are left behind in the magnitude of the result itself. The entire sphere of universe-being, apart from its great Author and End, can at best be only *tributary* to this 'fulness of him who filleth all in all.' Altogether, it forms but the *basis* of this wondrous promotion of humanity to an embodiment in Christ. As in him the creature and the Creator become mysteriously one, so in 'his body the Church' there is reflected the mystery of this union in the relation which it bears to the universe. The divinity which pervades it under the headship of the INCARNATE, lifts it immeasurably higher than the mere conditions of existence furnished to it *by the consummated offices of the Creation mediatorially directed.* These have, indeed, reared the temple, but it is the Lord who dwells in it. Nor can the sun or moon henceforth lend their light where the Lord sheds his glory. What has been furnished first and last by the offices of the Creation for the Church, is something incalculably vast, but bearing no proportion to the *infinity* of its inheritance in Christ. Even Mediation dies out as if exhausted by this wondrous travail, and is numbered among the things that were, but are not; as having, in common with other forms of

divine administration, fulfilled its destiny. Itself greater than the Creation, it is still but an *epoch of sovereignty*, which, as not commensurate with the Lord himself, cannot be commensurate with 'his body the Church.'

The Deity not revealed to man in Creation, but in Christ.

In the general forms of finite existence the Creator is *reflected*, not *represented*. His manifestations may be higher or lower, but they are nowhere drawn into a single focus, save in the Church under her Head, at once human and divine. Amidst them all, to our apprehension, there yet remains an incalculable space between the most advanced of these manifestations and the culminating point of the possible: they are manifestations of *attribute and sovereignty* on a wondrous scale, but not of *personal identification* with the creatures. In this highest sense, Deity is still infinitely remote, while the truth may be held in its integrity, 'in him we live, and move, and have our being;' but the nexus of a personal union of Deity with an order of his creatures by means of an individual selection—as of the human nature in Christ—fills up our conception of the possible of the fellowship of Deity with the finite, leaving absolutely no room in our thoughts for any advance in the history of divine manifestation, save in the progressive resplendency of this solitary fact.

Man not inferior in *nature*, but in development.

It is not inapposite here to advert to the characteristics of human nature implied in this view of its advancement in Christ; for these, it would seem, must bear an original correspondence with this destiny at variance with some notions respecting it. It seems obvious that the nature schemed in anticipation of such a destiny, instead

of being of an *inferior grade* to some others, must, in reality, occupy a first rank. Granted, that in point of *development*, it may, through its recency as a creation, its apostasy, and its accidental disparagements, be at present far in the rear of many others, by original constitution and subsequent history altogether diverse from itself. But no satisfactory argument can be built on such assumed discrepancies in favour of the superior capacity of the more, as compared with the less, advanced natures. *Nature* must be the foundation of that final preeminence of 'man in Christ' over other beings, which, undoubtedly, is the scriptural teaching on this head. Grace, glorious beyond all expression, as it visits man, must presuppose his *greatness*, not his meanness of capacity.

Proved by his high destiny.

It would be an unworthy view of God's wisdom, not less than of his love, which should assign all this opulence of thought and affection to a creature naturally one of the humblest of his great family, instead of proportioning his regards to the creature as he lies before Him in the scale of being. Of the contrary hypothesis, we can at least say that it is supported by no analogies fetched from any domain of life open to our inspection, and that it is flatly contradicted by the historical records of Providence. Everywhere do we see the wise adjustment of means to ends, of creatures to their uses, and of the highest faculty ranging toward the highest destiny. Even with men, material and workmanship are supposed to suit; they ever seek to fabricate technically, or otherwise, from substances adapted to their designs. We cannot therefore believe that a creature naturally mean has been selected by his Maker

merely to evince what a paradox he could exhibit to the universe in the redemption and uplifting of man.

Proved by his abode;

Were it not beside our purpose to argue this point, attention might be directed to the vast system of mundane arrangement necessarily pre-conditional to the formation of human nature; and to the fact that God has assigned a whole world elaborately constructed, and wondrously furnished, to be the domicile of this one race. We might refer also to the fact, that within the compass of the many centuries of the past, and by the combined energy of numberless minds, man has not as yet succeeded in writing out *himself*, any more than the possessions assigned to the use and progress of his own nature.

But apart from this, evidence more than enough is supplied on this point by the fact that the human nature was selected by God out of all that lay before him, as the one best suited to his purpose; for it is impossible to imagine that his choice could rest on insufficient reasons, or be an act of will unworthy of his wisdom. Surely the nature *assumed* by the Author of Nature can hardly be a secondary one in the scale of Creation, or bear less than the dignity of *primogeniture*, as analogous to the *filial majesty of his own Godhead.* The doctrine of the 8th Psalm in its application to Christ, clearly rests on the mundane supremacy of man; and it could only be an appropriate type of the higher sovereignty as it reflects this idea. The *world*-dominion of primeval man shadowed forth the *universe*-dominion of the God-man. It was a miniature image of this vast reality, and intended to show even in the initial stage of man's existence, the bud of that

by Christ's incarnation.

wonderful truth which was finally to overshadow and enrich the universe.

Relations of the universe to the Church.

The term 'fulness,' as now explained, has a relative aspect toward the Creation in the widest sense. All that lies beyond the sphere of 'the body' bears some relation to it, as being, under the headship of Christ, the perfection of the whole. 'Principalities and powers' are not unfrequently referred to in the New Testament, as mysteriously bound up with the progress and consummation of the Church.[1] It would appear that by far the most inviting and opulent sphere of study to advanced intelligents is the Church—that the mystery of the Godhead and of the universe opening in this direction, draws to itself the mightiest minds placed within a privileged range of observation.[2]

Other beings probably subject to the same laws as ourselves.

It is a familiar fallacy which leads us to assume that the *widest* sphere open to intelligents necessarily comprises the *loftiest truths;* or that the most advanced intellects are not met in certain directions of inquiry with impenetrable barriers to their progress. As it is certain that all knowledge whatsoever must be progressively acquired, save that of the INFINITE, so the fields open to acquisition may be bounded by his sovereignty. In its present sphere, we know that the human intellect is so bounded (though the boundaries may not be drawn by a line, to our apprehension, impassable); and also that it is braced up, and made robust by the labours indispensable to progress. There is no reason to suppose this law restricted to our own world, or the early stages of intellectual existence in general; but rather that it obtains in worlds beyond, and

[1] Eph. iii. 10. [2] Col. ii. 5; 1 Peter i. 12.

regulates the mental activities of beings capable of far more elevated thought than ourselves. Judging from analogy, we see no reason why themes of the highest interest to the most lofty beings should not be drawn from a world like ours, any more than that gems and gold should be fetched from one region to another devoid of them; or, than that portions of our own globe should be infinitely rich in historic associations, or in the productions of genius, not to be found elsewhere.

Evangelical truths belong only to our race.

The great evangelical discoveries are obviously of a nature to identify them with our world, and to make them *race-treasures.* All the facts, the history, and the administration included in the Gospel demonstrate this. They are not only *for* man, but *by* man. They have no existence apart from his nature and history. They are utterly remote from the qualities of mere abstractions, or any such generalizations as could be drawn by the mightiest intellects from other sources. The Incarnation, the Atonement, the exaltation of the God-man, the mission of the Spirit, and the formation of the Church, are all things *sui generis.* They are things to *be revealed,* not anticipated by an *à priori* reason, or any line of inductive argument. They had therefore to be waited for, even by the 'Sons of the Morning,' whose earliest song over the world's foundations was certainly not 'the song of the Lamb.'

The probable sources of angelic knowledge.

The example given us in Daniel of the power of an angel to interpret prophecy and to divine events, is, doubtless, a marvellous thing; but was this knowledge or inspiration? If the latter, then even the angel had only the privilege of the man divinely enlightened, without at all implying that he

possessed any *natural* foresight of the future. It seems clear that these 'principalities and powers' are as much bound down to the sphere of facts as ourselves, though the use they may be able to make of them, enlarged by the superiority of their resources, may be as much in advance of our own, as was the knowledge of St Paul's maturity to that of his childhood.

It will greatly add to our conception of this enlarged power to create knowledge out of the materials of human history, if we remember that these 'principalities and powers' have enjoyed an *existence contemporary* with every link of this wondrous chain of developed truth; that they have brought to its very commencement strong and well furnished powers of apprehension, not, perhaps, unaided by their own individual contact with great scenes of a moral order bearing a much older date than man's birthday. And, further, we may conceive that their interest in this great plot of the universe, of which the world is the field and man the centre, has not merely been sustained, but constantly increased, from the fact that they are profoundly stirred by its moral structure, and have been intimately connected with it *administratively*, throughout.

History and art our resources.

To us creatures of yesterday, placed by the flow of time so far below the great eras of evangelical facts, and of perceptive power just as span-like as our life, these great things seem at best, but as dim lights in the distance. We are compelled to accept *history* in the place of observation, and faith in the place of sight. Our feebleness is confessed, when, in order to preserve from oblivion the memory of

the eventful past, we call to our aid the stone, the iron, or the more precious metals, out of which to fabricate symbols of, and vouchers for these facts—the cross, the effigy wrought out of wood or stone, the canvas depicting the scenes of the Supper, or the death and resurrection of the Saviour. With us, all is an effort at rescue from oblivion, either outwardly, by artistic effort, or by church rite; or inwardly, by the effort of imaginational picturing, or ideal association with the facts themselves.

Such is the staple of our resources as mortals, if we take religion *historically;* showing us how impossible it were to have translated within us a religion of history into a living fact but by the power of the Holy Ghost; while, doubtless, this infirmity of our nature, together with its extreme feebleness of apprehension touching evangelical subjects, is to be taken into account, in abatement of human guilt for neglecting them. After all, *ignorance* is the strongest plea for divine indulgence, where, if the truths themselves were unveiled by a higher light, there must be reserved the heaviest penalty for those who 'neglect so great salvation.'

Angelic witnesses of Christ's work.

There is something marvellously impressive in the thought, that, in addition to the comparatively few human witnesses of the great facts of evangelical history, there exist witnesses, as the hosts of God for number, who stood by the side of these most privileged revelations of the redeeming Godhead, and who have drawn into themselves, and their eternal memories, the full impression of its awful glories. These things have been seen, brooded over, digested, generalized, and assimilated into the

powers of an ever-growing devotion toward the God-man; while this rising tide of thought and love runs on in the track of the Church, marking every vicissitude of its great fortunes, and expectant of the highest jubilee over the marriage supper of the Lamb. The whole 'mystery of iniquity' is here beheld in its deepest complications and most signal counter-working. Within the range of the world's field, of Christ's mediation, and of church consummation, all the representatives of good and evil in the universe are drawn together, test their powers, and are eternally pervaded by their results. Every antecedent economy of law, probation, and doom, has merged into this last, and been wrought into the harmonious whole. The benign and the judicial aspects of the divine government have received now their last illustrations. Every problem of interest to the universal family of God has been solved, and the last oracles have issued from the lips of the Judge, which, as 'the sound of many waters,' shall fill all ears for ever.

Amplitude and immutability of Christ's headship.

If evidence were wanting still, in confirmation of these ideas, this is furnished by the universe-amplitude of the Mediator's sway. All orders of intelligents whatsoever, however even morally antagonistic, have already felt the force of this sway, and have yet to be moulded by it, till ultimately they shall be released from its all-subduing pressure. The impress of this regime on its subjects when closed, will be simply transmitted onwards through an eternal future, and be to them all what attraction is to worlds, or light to the universe. *It is light*, however variously it may be concentrated, and however distant may be the

members of the great family of worlds from each other.

It must be remembered too, that whatever be the relations, and the influences of these relations, between the outlying universe and 'the body,' they are absolutely permanent—incapable of dissolution or change. They bear on them none of its marks; for the epochs of change, which imply but stages of imperfection, have all run out. Even were *ulterior* dispensations consistently with these principles, possible, they are not brought within the scope of legitimate human inquiry. If the Church as 'the body' be 'the fulness of him that filleth all in all,' then the very measures of that distributed 'fulness' to the universe, of which Christ is the fountain, are his behests as Mediator rather than as Creator; and, as such, cannot be viewed apart from his headship and church plenitude.

Christ's humanity present in his headship for ever.

It thence follows, that if this ascription be applicable to him through eternity in the attributes of his Godhead, it must be also applicable to him as 'the Head of the body,'—and that this eternal plenitude must henceforth be the issue of office as well as of divinity. According to this doctrine, the ultimate form of the Son's royalty is his headship of 'the body;' and whatever prerogatives appertain to him in the kingdom of the Father, appertain to him in this character. His administration in that kingdom will be always that of the God-man,—it will show Humanity as well as Godhead. All its glories will commingle as radiances from this complex nature, and from the lustre of his incarnation, sacrifice, and mediatorial history, through its measureless heights and depths, for ever.

To this fact, as it appears, our Lord himself looked, when he prayed that his disciples might finally be admitted to the vision of his glory. In the same prayer, he had before asked for *re-instatement* in the glory he had 'before the world was.' He, lastly, supplicates for the admission of his people to the glory given him *as the fruit of the paternal love, and the reward of his redeeming work.* This can be no other than the glory of his headship.

The passage in the opening of the Hebrews looks in the same direction, where the Son is termed 'the heir of all things;' an expression which is rather interpretable of the *future* than the past of his universe-relations, and especially of the consummated results of his mediation. It seems that his *heirship* lacks something of its *completeness*, if not extended to his headship of 'the body,' and the honours to be paid to him *in that capacity*, for ever. This is his fulness.

This the distinctive character of 'his own glory.'

It seems too, that when our Lord speaks of his final coming in 'his own glory,' as well as of the Father's, he not only warrants us in drawing a distinction between the two while they combine in himself, but that he significantly points to the *distinctive characters* of 'his own glory'[1] as exhibited in his *human headship.* And what else can we understand him as referring to, when he says, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne; as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne'?[2] Have we not here the distinction again drawn between 'his own glory' and the Father's?—the latter pointing to his mediatorial eminence which no mere creature can share,

[1] Luke ix. 26. [2] Rev. iii. 21.

and his own eminence as 'Head of the body,' in which that body may participate. And, further, what have we in the grand anthem which breaks forth from the neighbourhood of the throne when the Lamb takes the book, and which is taken up by every order of being in succession till it peals as thunder through heaven and earth, but a sublime act of homage, an epitome of the eternal strains of devotion which shall roll back to him from the universe AS THE LAMB, and through him to the Father God?[1]

The Apocalypse teaches the permanence of Christ's headship.

In the vision of the 'New Jerusalem' we have still before us 'the throne of God and the Lamb;' clearly indicating (if this vision be understood of the glorified Church) that the Lamb *is more than a mediatorial personage*, and that he reigns with the Father, though in a certain sense subordinately, for ever.

This doctrine is also taught us in an earlier chapter of the same book, where it is said, 'The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to fountains of living water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'[2] These passages imply, at once, the permanence of *the headship and its glory:* they cannot be explained by mediational references alone: they point to a condition of things *after* the kingdom has been delivered up to the Father, and to the last revelations of the great mystery of Christ and the Church. In these we see fulfilled the prayer before cited: 'I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.'[3] Throughout

[1] Rev. v. 9. [2] Rev. vii. 16. [3] John xvii. 24.

these descriptions of future blessedness, two ideas are always paramount—presence, and glory—the fellowship of Christ with his people, and the manifestation of his *headship sovereignty.*

This doctrine is not at all inconsistent with the explicit teaching of St Paul as to the final subjection of the Son to the Father, on the expiration of his mediatorial sway. Two questions may be raised on this point;—the first, as to the power invested by the Father in the Son,—the second, as to the condition implied in his *subjection* to the Father when that power has been reclaimed. This discussion, however, having been anticipated, it is only requisite here to add, that the subjection referred to by St Paul as the sequel to the mediatorial monarchy, cannot imply more than a return of the Son to his primal position in the Triune monarchy consequent on the resumption by the Father of the glory in that monarchy appertaining to himself, which for a season, he had given to the Son in return for the previous surrender of his own, in order that he might illustrate and *reinforce the principles of that monarchy in their sway over the universe, by his position and duties as a creature.* Accordingly, 'his own glory' as the Son, not only remains intact after he has returned to his subjection to the Father, but that glory is actually made to culminate into its *universe-fulness*, in his position as 'Head of the body the Church.' This is not only its highest relative aspect toward the universe as an assemblage of creatures, but the fulness of it as predestinated by the Father IN RELATION TO HIMSELF.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CHURCH.

Its Glory.

The Church as the 'pleroma' of Christ implies that it is pre-eminently his work, and his glory. It embodies all the results of his personal constitution as the God-man, and of his sway as the Mediator. The Church is thus the consummated and ultimate form of his manifestation to the universe. A 'pleroma' is a form and issue of divine manifestation; and its grand peculiarity is this, that it always signifies a revelation of *the divine nature*, and that too in the most perfect form apprehendable by creatures: in other words, it sets forth the *nature and the degree* of the divine manifestation. Neither the term nor its equivalent occurs in the Old Testament, any more than the word 'body;' for this reason, that the 'dispensation' containing the mystery of the 'pleroma' was then future. Divinity, in its deepest mysteries, and in its ultimate manifestations, was once a gospel reserve, and demanded for its development the whole series of New Testament facts and teachings.

The 'pleroma,' the highest form of divine manifestation.

The 'pleroma,' however, though it signifies the revelation of Deity in a transcendent form, does not directly assert divine personality, but only its *emanative powers* and their results in some form or

forms of finite existence. The examples of its use which relate to Christ and his work all evince this. Take John's gospel (first chapter), where 'the glory of the Only Begotten' is introduced, 'full of grace and truth.' This, while it declares his personal divinity, describes him in his human and official condition; and the 'pleroma' is to be understood accordingly. This is also evident from succeeding portions of the same chapter, where his 'pleroma' is said to be received by his disciples. This demonstrates that the 'pleroma' is *official*, though a personal issue. The passage, too, in Colossians (i. 19), 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,' is plainly descriptive of a 'pleroma' in the official sense,—namely, one appertaining to the God-man and Mediator founded in his divinity, but including all its human and relative accessories; because it is impossible that the Father's pleasure should otherwise constitute this 'pleroma' without impugning Christ's proper divinity, and entangling us in the Sabellian heresy.

The passage also in the same epistle, 'in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' certainly is not to be interpreted, as it usually is, by a mere reference to the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. The 'pleroma' in its proved scriptural significance will not allow this. As in the former instances, the 'pleroma' here mentioned is official, and is to be understood of the Triune personal relations in respect to the Humanity and the Work of Christ. This 'pan pleroma' is said to 'dwell' in Him 'bodily,' as opposed to typically, or rather really, in virtue of his humanity being the one shrine of Jehovah—Three-One, ensuring to the Christ an

ineffable *official completeness*. The Godhead, not a *person only*, has its eternal 'pleroma' in Him—it 'dwells' in Him bodily—*i.e.*, it is for ever one with his humanity as a nature, and in the redundancy of its glory to redeemed men. Hence, the expressions, 'ye are complete in Him;' and, 'that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.' It is for this broader reason than our Lord's personal divinity that the Apostle uses a rare expression with him—'all the fulness,' as in the former passage of the same epistle; and as he uses it in the Ephesians (chap. iii. 19), where the context shows that the divine nature and its personalities must be included—that these are all embodied in Christ, and are by him so imparted to his people, that this 'pan pleroma' becomes their heritage for ever: 'that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.'

This is confirmed by our Lord's own declaration where he says, '*We* will come to him;' or, 'All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you;' or, 'that they all may be one in us.' These scriptures all assert the doctrine of the 'pleroma;' and that this 'pleroma' is communicated to, and exhibited by THE CHURCH.

The results.

The result of these observations on the 'pleroma' may be thus put:—first, The Triune 'pleroma' appertains to Christ personally and officially: secondly, That it is communicated by him in such a measure as is appropriate to his headship of the Church: thirdly, That the Church becomes in consequence his 'pleroma.'

Besides this, however, our Lord's humanity and

The Church the Triune pleroma.

headship make his relation to the Church still, in a sense, peculiar. His creature form, and his office issuing from it, entitle the Church to rank as 'his body.' This figure plainly intimates, as before remarked, a *personal* completeness, and would be altogether irrelevantly applied to the divine persons as such; but in all other respects 'the pleroma' is to be affirmed with respect to them also,—their ultimate form of manifestation is THE CHURCH. Thus, the manifestations of Godhead in the Church are partly direct, partly indirect: direct with respect to Christ himself—indirect, as by means of Christ.

The pleroma of the Holy Spirit.

The following observations are intended to show, accordingly, 'the pleroma' of the Holy Spirit in his church office. In the apostolic writings, in the Acts, and also in the last words of Christ himself, we perceive this truth very emphatically brought out. All the testimonies to which we have referred, when collated, demonstrate the fact of the gift of the Spirit to the Church, and his permanent indwelling in it. He is represented as being away from the world in general, but in a very plenary manner present in the souls of disciples. In fact, his plenary presence in them is but the overflow of his presence in Christ himself. As Christ is the 'Anointed,' so his people receive his 'unction' as the seal of their relation to him as 'Head of the body.' Thus, the Aaronic figure of the oil of consecration running from the beard down to the skirts of the robes pontifical, employed by the Psalmist for another end, fitly denotes the evangelical mystery of the gift of the Spirit's 'unction' derived to 'the body' from its glorified Head.

The Church and the Spirit—their unity.

It is appropriate here to introduce St Paul's teaching on this subject: 'There is one body, and one Spirit.'[1] If an analogical reference may be here permitted, then the Church and the Spirit are to each other what the body and the soul are to the man. *Relatively*, though *not substantially*, they are *one*. There can be no Church without the combination of these two—an aggregate humanity and a divine indwelling Spirit. The paramount doctrine seems to be this; that as there is no soul-nature beyond humanity, so there is no divine indwelling Spirit beyond the Church. There is just as much an unity of 'the body' as an 'unity of the Spirit.' As under one headship there cannot be more than 'one body,' so neither in that body can there be more than 'one Spirit.'

The Holy Ghost is thus declared to be the Spirit of the Church as he is the Spirit of Christ. He imparts himself to all who are Christ's, and so imparts *Christ himself*. His gifts may be diverse, but his presence, like his nature, is one. Time, space, and all other attributes of mundane existence interfere not with the plenary endowments of an omnipresent Spirit. He identifies all the components of this 'body,' however scattered, or circumstantially overlaid. He effectuates their eternal unity, and aggregates them in their eternal relations to each other under the headship of Christ.

The mystery of redemption only taught by the Spirit.

But the point now especially to be regarded is, the *plenitude* of the Spirit, and the consequent plenitude of 'the body of Christ;' so that it becomes his 'fulness'—divinely complete as a manifestation of his personal and official glory. The Spirit's

[1] Eph. iv. 4.

operations, taken in their full scope, are as much characteristic of *ultimate* manifestations of this divine person within the sphere of redeemed manhood, as are the manifestations of Christ as Head of 'the body.' He is said to 'search all things, yea the deep things of God;'[1] an expression which cannot mean less in this connection than that he translates into the glorious verities of the spiritual life both present and to come, the profound mystery of God in human redemption.

In truth, the whole doctrine of the Spirit in this respect is of stupendous moment, since it seems to intimate, that apart from his power of immediately revealing to our nature 'the glory of this mystery,' it is impossible that it should ever become the subject of knowledge *directly* to any order of creatures. It is true, that with respect to man the obstacle to its acquisition lies *in limine* in his apostasy. But this is not the only obstacle: *no status of nature as such could secure this knowledge to any class of beings.* In *all cases* the Spirit must be the interpreter of these 'deep things of God.'

No creature as such can know God.

True, their phenomena and their doctrinal aspects might be very fully apprehended by the power of an intellect moving in a sphere much higher than our own; but the truth, the fulness, and the glory of these things as they are in God, and as they are in the subjects of them *when immediately made known*, can be only apprehended by a fellowship with the divine nature. *All creatures whatsoever* are shut out of this mystery, saving the members of 'the body,' who are inhabited and actuated by the Spirit. To them, more than a

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 10.

world or an universe is opened in this mystery of the Infinite. It is God revealing God to them—not the amplitude or the theory of his works; not the range of his attributes; but *the reality of his very nature* to a consciousness far more profound than that of reason, or the intuitions of the moral man.

God alone can reveal himself.

The doctrine of the Spirit is essentially that of *supernaturalism*, and, as the correlative of supernaturalism, *sovereignty*. It opens the access to a temple which crowns the heights of the universe, and the farthest recess of that temple—of old imaged by the Holy of Holies. While this doctrine of the Spirit implies an immediate agency of God upon the soul in accordance with its profoundest faculties and aspirations along the line of its immortality, it implies also *indefinite progression*,—an ever-growing capacity in man for the fruition of the First Being. It is arrested by no laws which circumscribe a nature directed to spheres of knowledge, which, however vast, are yet finite, and which, however amplified beyond earlier acquisition, have no prerogative of *perpetually enlarging the powers of the mind itself*.

Man's nature interpreted by the Spirit.

It should be remembered also, that the power of the Spirit in revealing to man the depths of the divine nature, employs itself in this work in perpetual association with man's moral history as a creature fallen, but the subject of Redemption. It must, therefore, include that history in all its stages, —all the phases of his apostasy, the depths of his guilt, and the fulness of his recovery. This Spirit is to man, individually taken, the interpreter of the *mystery of his life*, and the mystery of Providence and futurity, as well as of his justification, and

election to life eternal. He alone holds the key of the human heart, which, like that of the king, he turneth 'whithersoever he will.'

The Spirit is the one all-sufficient antagonist in man to his great adversary the devil, even as he led up Jesus himself, mailed and weaponed out of his armoury, to the scene of his conflict in the wilderness.

The Spirit alone brings the Gospel to the heart, and rears within man a kingdom eternal as his nature, and glorious as his Saviour. The Spirit creates the harmonies and melodies of the soul, and breathes into the breasts which he visits the atmosphere of the 'heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' It is his work to inspire the sympathies of brotherhood, and to wind around the hearts of the faithful the golden zone of an all-perfecting charity. It is even his work to raise the Bride at last, out of her chambers of dust and darkness, to adorn her with her gems and beautiful garments, and to put upon her the last lineaments of perfection, when Christ himself shall see in her neither 'spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing.'[1]

Here, again, we may suggest, that though a distinction should be drawn between the office of the Spirit *as subject to the Mediator*, and the Spirit's relation to Christ *when his kingdom is delivered up;* yet that his relation to 'the body' must ever remain, and his work in it be perpetuated as his 'pleroma.' Without him, 'the body' could neither have been gathered nor perfected; and without his plenitude, assuredly, it could not be 'the fulness of him that filleth all in all.'

[1] Eph. v. 27.

His original relation to our race.

Hence, it is perceptible why this plenitude of the Spirit was withheld during ages anterior to the formal institution of the headship of Christ. Preliminary and shadowy manifestations *heralded* his coming. If we hold the manifestation of the Spirit as included in the original endowments of human nature, and as being implied in the divine interpellation, 'Let us make man in our image;' this manifestation must yet be held to be simply ruled by the relations of man's nature to that of the Godhead, and as proportionate to his position as *a creature in its infancy*. It is needless to prove that the hereditary transmission of this gift from the great federal progenitor of his race, had he retained it, would have been after the same measure in which he himself possessed it. A *race-status* in respect to the Spirit would have been secured, which might have descended through all the sections and generations of manhood, exactly quadrating with *the status of the first*, but resting immeasurably short of the endowments of 'the body.'

His office in the Jewish Church.

Dispensations anterior to Christianity, particularly the Jewish, while they evince the presence of the Spirit, were devoid of that plenary baptism of his by which the 'new creature' was brought into life, and reared to its last stage of individual and collective perfection. He appears as the former of *select and illustrious characters*, at certain epochs, and for certain services in connection with the *public history of religion*, rather than as the Creator of individual high-toned piety, or than as the all-informing Spirit of a body called the Church. Prophets, priests, and kings, as the great functionaries of public or state religion, were the persons chiefly

visited with the glory of his anointing; while as to the body politic, or the communities represented by them, his offices were shadowed forth by a minute and expressive ceremonial, rather than by any positive communications of his highest behests.

Throughout the entire Old Testament, the Spirit is just as much the subject of promise as is the Messiah himself; and the glory of the one was no less the *reserve of the future* than it was of the other.

The capacity of human nature for the Spirit.

Nor are the special endowments of the Spirit as they are placed before us in the New Testament, without their broader teachings as to the *fulness* which it appertains to him to exhibit on behalf of the Lord and his body. In general, they teach the transcendent power which the Spirit exerts over redeemed man in his aggregate relation to Christ; and that his *nature* is meant to be in a most wonderful manner, the sphere of his almighty operations. They intimate the power in that nature, on the one hand, of *unlimited recipiency*, and on the other, of *unlimited communication*. In fact, they reveal to us that nature as brought by the redeeming economy *into a state of eternal pupilage to the Omniscient Spirit*, and into the closest possible correspondence with the law which rules the transmissions of divinity *from the higher to the lower nature of Christ himself*.

This probably the key to the future life.

It is quite possible without exaggeration, so to generalize the peculiar endowments referred to as to reach the conclusion that the human nature in its ultimate state of perfection, is intended rather to be a medium for the manifestation of the Triune God, than to be an object of mere creaturely magnificence. Let us refer but to one instance—the

fact of Inspiration, vouchsafed primarily to the apostles and extraordinary ministers of Christ, but in a secondary sense to every member of the body mystical. It is far too narrow a view of this fact which limits it to the necessities of our present state, and the condition of the Church in its existing infancy. The broad, and, as we understand it, the true doctrine of the fact, carries us onward into all the mysterious progressions of the future life. The theory of this life, when thus placed before us, is INSPIRATION. The threshold facts and teachings of the same religion are made *the staple of eternal manifestations* by the same Power that has already made them verities to individuals and to 'the body.' As these are *infinite things*, so are they progressively inwrought into that scheme of life, which, begun on earth, subsists in 'the body,' as in Christ himself, in an eternal fulness.

Inspiration an eternal necessity.

Inspiration, as it seems to us, is an *eternal necessity* from the nature of the truths to be apprehended, and from the nature of the law which binds 'the body' to 'the Head.' Eternally opened and applied by the Spirit resident in 'the body' for this end, 'the mystery of God and of Christ' is translated into the life of the redeemed with a freshness and power which can never suffer it to become stationary at the most advanced point conceivable, or do less than deepen the inexpressible conviction that there is still an untrodden infinite before the path of its immortality, crowded with still higher wonders of the Triune glory. Can we see less than this in our Lord's own record of the Spirit which styles him 'the Spirit of Truth'?—that he is the great evangelical revealer commissioned at present

to conduct his disciples through all the stages of their earthly pupilage, and then to transport them into the higher realms of the evangelical doctrine for ever—pouring on their minds floods of enlightenment, and uniting truth and holiness in the members of the divine brotherhood, at once the highest qualities of creatures, and the unfailing fount of blessedness.

Distinction between man and other orders of beings.

If there be truth in these remarks on the office of the Spirit on behalf of the body of Christ, the great distinction between human nature as redeemed and other natures outlying this condition, is that the former is privileged in consequence with *an eternal communion of the Spirit*, while the latter are bounded by the *gifts of original capacity, and their appended spheres of exercise and advancement. Genius*, for example, as it is generally understood, which sets one man immeasurably ahead of a million of his fellows, may illustrate the one condition of intelligence,—*Inspiration* existing in the seer, the apostle, or 'man of God,' as the Scripture terms him, may illustrate the other. Both are excellent endowments; but the latter is vastly in advance of the former, since it implies access to a region of truth otherwise beyond our range, and comprised in that peculiar domain of it expressed in the apostolic phrase, 'the deep things of God.'

From all fact and precedent collected out of the Scriptures, we judge this the distinguishing endowment of redeemed humanity, and a necessary correlative of its incorporation into Christ. Thus, while the restorative operations of the Spirit are completed either within the term of life as it is, or in 'the day of redemption' which his sealing antici-

The Spirit's work only to be understood in its last issues.

pates, these are yet to be regarded but as *preliminaries* to his eternal correspondence with human nature as it subsists in Christ, and stand related to it only as means to this end. It is the Spirit's work first to rear the temple of God, and then, to fill it with his glory. It is his to rescue, and to rear humanity for its great future destiny, and to *be himself that destiny* by unveiling to it all that is communicable of the divine nature.

Nor can the grandeur of his preliminary operations be apprehended but in the light of this transcendent issue. Upon this 'stone,' if anywhere, engraven as it is with the name of Christ, are the 'seven eyes' of prophecy. Hence the intimations of this glorious sequel to be noted in the Scriptures themselves. The water that Christ gives is the 'well,'—that is, the grand resident spring of vitality in the soul, issuing in eternal life. Hence, the 'rivers of living water' which flow out of him that believes on his name are the mighty issues of the Spirit's fulness, and the glory of the promise drawn out through eternity, 'If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.'

The last chapter of the Apocalypse, which brings before us the ultimate blessedness of the Church, shows us 'the throne of God and of the Lamb' pouring its life-flood 'clear as crystal,' and bearing into the bosoms of the redeemed more than the treasures of the universe—'all the fulness of God.' 'The throne' which overshadows that glorious land, is not the habitation of Law, or the dwelling-place of Mercy; it is the spring-head of an all-vitalizing power which opens innumerable millions of hearts to the richest perceptions of the INFINITE, and

creates the ineffable thirst which it ineffably fills. It is the unfolded mystery of the communicableness of God to his creatures BY HIMSELF ALONE; as if superseding all the powers of his universe as insufficient to unfold HIMSELF, he gives to his Spirit, through the mediation of his Son, a work answerable to the glory of his person, and the glory of his appellation, 'the Spirit of Truth.'

Let us only add, that the *final promise* of Christ, looking far beyond time and the world into the remotest depths of futurity, at once comprehensive of all the purposes of grace, and all the attributes of glory, is simply the invitation to participate in this eternal fulness of the Spirit as of 'the water of life, freely.'

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CHURCH—ITS GLORY.

The Pleroma of the Father.

The view advanced of the Church as the 'fulness' of Christ, implies that in addition to the 'fulness' of the Holy Spirit, it includes also the 'fulness' of the Father-God.

The Father the ultimate manifestation of Deity.

As to Christ and the Holy Spirit, though their glories be respectively embodied in the Church, they yet do but reflect the glories of the Father as the all-perfecting manifestation of Deity. The ideas suggested by the scripture terms Son, and Holy Spirit, and their cognate terms Image, and Procession, immediately relate to this great ultimate truth of the Father's manifestation.

Referring briefly to the broader doctrine of Creation as a medium for manifesting God, it is at once obvious that this purpose, though pervading the universe, may be carried out by methods exceedingly diverse one from another,—all, doubtless, intimately related, but by no means holding *the same rank* in relation to the whole. It would be here an unwarrantable digression which should present the manifold illustrations of this fact furnished by our

own world; yet, it is important to bear in mind how wonderfully it is inculcated, because it supplies us with data of the greatest service when applied to truths of a much higher order.

The Deity of Reason.

Without speculating on the possibilities of divine manifestation, or their actual existence in spheres too remote for our observation, we have forms of divine manifestation in our own sphere of life amply sufficient for this purpose. For instance, there is the Deity of Reason and Philosophy, sublime and wonderful as an *abstraction*, but hardly anything more. If, logically, even the existence of Deity cannot be proved, the *belief* that supplies its place must, indeed, be an attenuated thing, and liable to much fluctuation. It can hardly be deemed that form of the positive which for ever repels the negative, and which to the consciousness of man enthrones an absolute Being in the illimitable domains of duration and space. Here, then, is an example, without going further, of the dimness of a divine manifestation *to the reason of man*, after its mightiest efforts have been put forth in doing battle against atheistic theories, and in seeking the repose of a solid foundation for the disciples of Theism. It cannot be concealed that Reason here discovers her feebleness as she does nowhere else, and that the first truth of existence is by no means the first in its force of evidence.

The Deity of Nature.

Then, there is the Deity of the visible universe —the world-maker, the world-preserver,—not the abstract Deity of Reason, but the working Deity of the world. Do we here perceive any advance in faith over the naked rationalist, on the part of the students of Nature?—that Nature of which they

themselves make a part, and which opens to them a thousand avenues of profoundly stirring research? We may ask here, if Atheism is limited to the metaphysical speculatist, or whether it be not at least equally common among the students of Nature? Where are the temples which any of them have reared to the Creator? and where the proofs of the practical force of the most favourable tenets they may be supposed to hold as to his being and perfections?

Theistic ideas incapable of development.

Yet, undoubtedly, there are in both departments manifestations of God, and rich elements of religious thought and feeling. Much of all this haziness is indeed due to *moral* causes; but not the whole. These facts are decisive, not of the possibility but of the absolute certainty of a human status, which if not brought up by some *specialities superadded*, must have entailed an eternal *infancy* on man with respect to all the grand problems of his race, present and future. The light that would have visited him in this condition, must have been both dim and cold—barely sufficient, it might be, to preserve his higher life from extinction, but totally unfit to rear it to its palm. To the end of the world, Theism collected from rational and experimental sources, would have been, what at best it is now with all its vaunt, a mere Philosophy, but *an infant's Religion*, which if not put away for higher things, would entail nothing but dwarfishness on humanity. With the same elementary truths, the same small stock of principles (if principles they could be called), held feebly, and enunciated falteringly—principles on which little could be engrafted, and admitting of no development correspondent with

human knowledge in general—*Religion would have been left a stationary starveling.*

Revelation progressive.

Even Revelation has its scale of truth immensely graduated, and its temple high and fair from its foundation to its topstone. Everything is cumulative and progressive, ever tending upwards, as it were, from earth to heaven, not keeping to the unbroken level of the plain; yet the *first* truth of Revelation is the *last* which Reason attempts to clutch, and oft in vain: its beginning overreaches what mere reason is content to end with. The initial Bible utterance of a God is by a word which enunciates the last and highest mysteries of the divine nature. The TRIUNE is the Jehovah of inspiration; the unity of Theism is but half the truth of this first great oracle of God.

The Father revealed by the Son.

The Old Testament, abounding as it does with notices of its own great primary truth, yet leaves it in partial development throughout: it is there, but not drawn out into the grand New Testament formula, to which even eternity can add nothing. The same general appellations proper to Deity are given to each of the Persons; while it is worth remarking, that though the Son and the Spirit have their names in these earlier records, that of THE FATHER is nowhere found. This name remained a mystery throughout the earlier ages of the Church, and could not but remain so, till 'the Only-Begotten' 'declared him.' This name is, in fact, the foundation of the New Testament, and as much distinguishes it from the Old, as does the Person of the Saviour, and the accomplishment of Redemption. This name not only inaugurated a new era of revealed truth, but was *the key to the whole mystery of*

the Person and Work of Jesus; and also, to the mystery of the mission of the Holy Ghost. One whole gospel is devoted to the demonstration of the divinity of Jesus *as the Son*, and to show that he made his mission to turn upon this truth—the Father.

The Son's humanity manifests the Father.

It was only by establishing this thoroughly, and for ever, that it *became possible to manifest the Father*, and to accomplish the great purpose of his mission, since his *human person thus became the visible reflex of his divine Sonship*, and made the Father-God an object of human perception and confidence. The only will that he recognised beyond his own was the Father's. The voice that charmed or honoured him was the Father's. The prayers that he offered were to the Father. The obedience which, as it were in one act, expanded over his life, and ruled his body, soul, and spirit, was an offering to the Father. The words of Jesus in his last prayer are on this point decisive: 'I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'[1] The reference to his 'work' here cannot be understood of his *mediatorial* work, since that was properly not yet begun; but of his *ministerial* work, which was obviously then completed. Accordingly, he adds, 'I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world.' Nor was the death that he died as a sin-offering for the world, anything but an all-sufficing tribute to the rectoral majesty of the Father.

It was the Father who veiled the sun in his last agony, rent the rocks, and raised the dead. The Father's angels ministered to him in the chamber

[1] John xvii. 4.

of the sepulchre, as it was the Father's power which raised him from the dead, and enthroned him 'over all things' as his reward.

Even the consolatory message conveyed to his disciples by the women from the sepulchre embodies this truth with all its stupendous auguries of future manifestation: 'I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God;'[1] while almost his last reported words ere his feet were lifted from Mount Olivet to the skies, 'It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put in his own power,' are replete with the spirit of that one great doctrine which may be said to be the Alpha and the Omega of his mission—THE SOVEREIGN FATHER.

Testimony of the Spirit to the Father.

The testimony of the Spirit is none other than the testimony of Jesus. To this, the first apostolic discourses in Jerusalem and elsewhere, bear ample witness. It is unnecessary to cite these: they are only referred to generally, to show how fully 'the Spirit of Truth' answered to his name in all the earliest extant records of his mission. Every preface to the apostolic epistles, and every form of benediction they include, place *this Name foremost*, as the great catholic truth for ever enthroned in the Church, and as being to the new creation what the name God was to the old.

These brief examples may suffice to illustrate the scope of our starting remark, that the whole New Testament is to be regarded simply as the MANIFESTATION OF THE FATHER BY THE SON. This name

[1] John xxi. 17.

therefore comprises, together with the last and highest truth of religion, all the possible elements of divine manifestation to, and through human nature, by Christ and the Church.

The manifestation of the Father, all-perfecting.

The passages which establish this last point are, like the former, too abundant for citation beyond an example or two. Take the following from Ephesians; the apostolic prayer, which contains petitions of transcendent import, ends thus, 'that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.'[1] These words forming the climax of this wonderful prayer, are not to be understood as simply exegetic of all that precedes, but as expressing a new and consummating petition for the enjoyment of the most soul-replenishing fellowship of the FATHER-GOD. They are, in fact, but a version of our Lord's own expressions, which contain both a promise and a prayer: 'We will come to him, and make our abode with him.'[2] 'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.'[3] All these varied and sublime expressions denote *the experimental fulness of the Father-God, as the last and highest reach of creature fruition.*

So also in the Epistle to the Colossians, we have this amazing truth compressed within the limits of a single verse running thus: 'That their hearts might be knit together in love, and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.'[4] If the passage in Ephesians be collated with this, it becomes manifest that

[1] Eph. iii. 19.
[2] John xiv. 23.
[3] John xvii. 21.
[4] Col. ii. 2.

the latter is only the former condensed; and that, in both instances, the fulness of the spiritual glory of the New Testament includes the mystery of the Father, as well as the mystery of Christ; that the acknowledgment prayed for is personal and experimental; and that the church participation in it which the prayer includes in both instances, is the same thing as that 'perfect love,' or fulness of the divine nature in man, of which St John speaks also. In the passage before us, as in that of the Ephesians, 'the being knit together in love,' or 'the being rooted and grounded in love,' is the condition of mind both as to individuals and the Church, set forth as the very essence of the knowledge of this great mystery of God.

The same doctrine is put before us in another passage in Ephesians: 'One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'[1] The last clause of this verse contains the truth more especially unfolded in the preceding passages as the mystery of God in man, answerably to which is the apostolic expression of the Church being 'in God the Father;' and this also, 'your life is hid with Christ in God,' that is, in the Father; the latter expression affords us a glimpse of the last sphere of redeemed humanity, as common to Christ and his people, and answers to another scripture, 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

The final passage to be quoted in this direction is found in Corinthians: 'That God may be all in all:'[2] it is here introduced, not so much with a view to a general exposition, as to show its relation

[1] Eph. iv. 6. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

to this 'mystery of the Father and of Christ.' Whatever be its meaning as it stands related to the issue of the mediatorial kingdom, it is manifest that in some lofty sense or other, the Father-God will by that event be brought *into full personal relations with the mystical body of the Redeemer;* and that to this date, his fellowship with that 'body' is but *initial*, and, in certain respects, *incomplete.* Then, and not till then, shall the glory of the divine Fatherhood be perfectly revealed—'God shall be all in all.' We dilate not here on the more general sense of this expression, 'all in all,' which may be equivalently rendered by the one so frequently adduced in this part of our discussion, 'Him who filleth all in all.' Undoubtedly, its primary meaning must here be understood of the Father's manifestation in the 'body' of Christ. His all—that is, 'his fulness'—from that hour becomes the eternal inheritance of the Church, and may be understood as the last and consummating import of our Lord's own wonderful promise to his disciples, 'All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, He shall take of mine, and he shall show it unto you.'[1]

By the light of these passages, then, we seem bound to interpret all those scriptures which speak of 'the glory of God' as the grand scope of christian holiness and expectance: this is that glory 'to be revealed in us,' for which, as the apostle tells us, 'the creature made subject to vanity, waiteth.'

Thus 'the fulness of God,' in the sense of *the manifestation of the Father*, is shown to be identi-

[1] John xvi. 15.

fied with the manifestations of the Son and the Spirit in the 'body' the Church. Herein they converge in eternal resplendency, and set up this one great light of the moral universe as all-sufficient to illustrate, though not to measure, the resources of Godhead.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CHURCH—ITS GLORY.

The Sonship.

The matter of the foregoing chapter respecting the 'pleroma' of the Father as comprised in the Church, is fully borne out by a view of its human correlatives, and may be properly completed by a brief exposition of these—viz., the Sonship, the Kingship, and the Priesthood, evangelically represented as centering in redeemed man.

Adoption in its relation to Christ and 'the body.'

1. The Sonship.—This the Scripture denotes by such phrases as these: 'The adoption of children'—'The adoption of sons'—or, more briefly and emphatically, 'The adoption.' This relation will appear to be altogether peculiar and transcendental, if we contemplate it in connection with Christ and the 'body,' rather than in the more vague and general sense of a great privilege of grace without pointing out the particular sense in which it is so.

Bearing in mind the previous doctrine, that the sovereign Father is revealed by 'his only begotten Son' *alone*, and that the Son himself is revealed in human nature—it becomes apparent, that while our Lord holds an exclusive and ineffable relation to the Father as to his divine nature, his human nature is to be regarded as *the filial duplicate and reflex of his higher title*. The human nature in him becomes not

merely the mirror of divine manifestation both in respect to himself and the Father, but the basis of *a filiation of humanity*, as it were, identified with itself. God is thus brought into human nature by that divine person who has affiliated it to himself, and human nature, in return, is brought into God by this bond of a common nature: this intervening link unites the finite with the Infinite.

According to this, the steps are few, but wonderful, by which man rises into his relation with the Father. *The human status of Christ himself is transmitted into the members of his body mystical*, so that he becomes, according to St Paul's language, 'the first-born among many brethren.'[1] In this view, it becomes also plain what is meant by the divine predestination, that they should be 'conformed to the image of his Son.' This must mean more than a moral conformity to Christ: it must mean *the reflected filial image in his people*, whether this 'image' be understood of the human nature in Christ, or of the divine—or of both; because it is evident that the relation between him as 'the First-born' and them as the 'brethren,' can only be established on the basis of a *common filiation*.

Predestination refers to adoption.

It is remarkable that the passages in which this much controverted word predestination occurs, in addition to the one before us, are those in the opening of the Epistle to the Ephesians; and that, in each case, it is introduced in immediate relation *to the doctrine of Adoption*. Nor can we fail to observe that the word itself which signifies to define or bound beforehand, possesses in this reference a peculiar aptness of meaning; for it *defines or bounds*

[1] Rom. viii. 29.

the nature of this privilege, separating it on either hand from every other, and, by this very distinction pre-intimating its *unique* character as a display of sovereign grace.

Adoption a family relation.

The same truth is also reflected from another passage in the same epistle: 'If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;' since the jointure spoken of as appertaining to Christ and the Church, could only flow from *the common family* relation or brotherhood subsisting between them as established by 'the adoption.' As children, in the broad sense, we might suppose them in any rank, higher or lower, to be 'heirs of God;' but not, therefore, 'joint heirs with Christ.' The family unity or brotherhood alone secures this.

Many of the passages also which speak of the 'eternal life' have the same doctrine infolded in them. The Son nowhere represents himself as bestowing 'eternal life' on his people apart from the Father,—a fact which cannot be explained by general references to the Father's supremacy as manifested in the mission and prerogatives of the Son's mediation. All this is, indeed, implied; but the full exposition of the 'eternal life' is only reached by a special reference to 'the mystery of the Father' as included in 'the mystery of Christ,' before noticed. 'This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' The eternal life is here represented as flowing equally from the Father and the Son. Again, 'I give unto them eternal life;' but it is added, 'The Father, that gave them me, is greater than all;' and again, 'I and my Father are one,'—*i.e.*, united in the bestowment of eternal life. This is the

scope of the passage, and not merely the assertion of unity in respect to the divine nature.

Two additional passages from John, chap. xvii., may be here introduced in confirmation of this view: 'The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one.' This declaration cannot refer to the apostles as such, for in this portion of the prayer *the whole Church* is expressly comprehended. Hence, it is not to be interpreted of the *glory of mission* (which at first sight seems plausible), but of the *glory of 'the adoption,'* because this alone is answerable to the words which follow; 'that they may be one, as we are one.' *This glory belongs to the whole Church*, and is the only one of which so sublime an issue as this can be possibly predicated; for it is nothing less than the participation by the 'body' of the *filial glory of its Head.*

The second passage, standing at the close of the same chapter, is equally remarkable, and for our purpose, still more explicit: 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' The continuous manifestation of the Father here promised by Christ to his disciples, beginning with his human ministry, extending through the whole range of his mediatorial reign, and crowning its close, is declared to be pre-determined with a view to establish and perfect *the filial grace in them, agreeably with his own personal enjoyment of it.* Paternal love in *him* is paternal love in *them:* there is no difference whatever in its *nature:* the fount gushes through him into them; their common relation, therefore, must be a *filial one*, and

its glory is sufficiently outspoken by the fact. The words 'and I in them' are not mere expletives: they express the unbounded complacency of Christ in this result; and that *his fellowship with them for ever is a necessary element in the event itself.*

Eternal life a paternal gift.

Thus the 'eternal life' is something different from a mere form of glorified existence which may belong to any and every order of holy beings. It is all this, but it is something more and higher than this: it is A PATERNAL GIFT as appertaining to redeemed men. In the primary sense, it is *an emanation from the Father through Christ as the divine Son, as Mediator, and also as its human archetype.* These are its distinguishing peculiarities. The 'eternal life' is transcendental because it is filial—something *bounded by the family relation*, and partaking at once of the fulness of the Father, as well as of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The passages (chiefly found in John's epistle) which relate to sonship, combine to enforce this view. 'Behold,' says John, 'what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.'[1] Why this consequence? Plainly, because of the world's non-recognition of the *family likeness*, the cast of countenance, the character, the idiosyncrasies which distinguish families from each other, as well as individuals; so that, in general, one is a clue to the rest. Had the world known Christ, it would have known his people by means of their common resemblance—their lineaments of brotherhood.

The same idea breaks forth in the following

[1] 1 John iii. 1.

verse: 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.' Whatever are the mysteries which at present enshroud us, and whatever the disparity between our title and our lot—one thing at least is certain, that the revealed glory of believers, whenever it shall take place, must be *that of the First-born and the Brethren;* in other words, a filial glory is common to both.

Related to these scriptures are those in the same epistle which declare that 'love is of God;' that 'God is love;' that 'he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him;' and that every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' These and similar passages all unite in ascribing *to the Father the geniture of the christian nature; that this geniture is by* HIS LOVE; and that the human manifestation of it is the love of the brotherhood. These are all *filial* properties and outgoings—the very life-blood of the body mystical—the mighty current setting in from the heart of the eternal Father, through Jesus the Son as both human and divine, and by the Holy Ghost. This is the one element of the *eternal life*—its unity—and the fulness of its glory.

The adoption consummated by the resurrection.

This 'fulness' of the Father-God is the great crowning fact of the relation of human sonship by Christ Jesus. The whole scheme of the gospel is but one continuous testimony to this effect. The gift of sonship carries with it every endowment, present and prospective; while every arrangement and event of Mediation look to *this* as the goal of all things. Even the travail and the groans of

the Creation, not unreciprocated by the Redeemed themselves, are but harbingers of 'the adoption' to be effected by the resurrection and last gathering of 'the body;' and the recovered life of the creature, when the bondage of corruption is broken—whatever be its destiny—is but the reflected glory of 'the sons of God.' It is impossible for us to conceive of a creature nature and a creature destiny comparable to this.

Thus far, then, the doctrine advanced, that the Church is not only the 'pleroma' of Christ and of the Spirit, but of the Father also, is clearly supported by the doctrine of 'Adoption.' The filial relation as made out from the Scriptures, is obviously *transcendental:* it is so thoroughly blended with the Incarnation, and with the personal relation of Christ himself to the Father, that no warrantable notion of creature elevation can go beyond it. It brings redeemed man into fellowship through Christ with the infinite Father, so intimately, that his manifestation necessarily implies in this relation, '*his fulness.*' It is a *consummative* manifestation; and, therefore, as truly bounds the era and purposes of Mediation, as the conditions of approach between the finite and the Infinite must be held to have their limits.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CHURCH—ITS GLORY.

The Kingship.

The second relation of redeemed man to God or the Father, is that of kingship, which in truth is but an obvious derivative from 'the adoption:' the one signifies a *nature*, the other an *office*. 'I appoint unto you a kingdom,' said Christ to his disciples, 'as my Father hath appointed me.'[1] These words have a primary, but not an exclusive reference to the apostles; subordinately, they appertain to ministers in general. But believers as such, are said to be made by Christ, 'kings and priests unto God and his Father.'[2] Nor are the words of Peter less explicit: 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;'[3]—words obviously connecting the privileges of the theocracy which had then passed away with 'the kingdom of God' recently established. As to the Israelites, the regal dignity of their national status flowed from their dignity as the 'first-born,'[4] as this dignity does from 'the adoption' to Christians; and peradventure, a glance at the type may afford some insight into the character of the antitype.

Kingship under the theocracy.

When the Israelites became God's kings on the

[1] Luke xxii. 29.
[2] Rev. i. 6.
[3] 1 Pet. ii. 9.
[4] Exodus.

earth, they did not receive with this honour the patent of universal dominion. This construction, indeed, readily suggested itself to their arrogant degeneracy, but was as remote from the enlightened mind of the nation, as it was from God's intention. They were kings, not in the political sense, to assume supremacy over the world in the way that Mahomedanism has done ; but to enjoy a chartered independence and an invincibility against aggression. They were kings as enjoying a peculiar dowry of Providence never granted to any other people. Still more were they kings in the moral and religious aspects of their nationality, since that which puts human nature in its primitive position, and elevates it to intercourse with God, must be the true sovereignty of man, and the key to all his relations with this world or that which is to come.

The sovereignty of Israel then, as a people, was based on their *covenant relations with God* and the blessings which arose out of these, not merely of a collective, but of an individual bearing. Theirs was the sovereignty of principle and character—the sovereignty of truth and repose, of sufficiency and moral elevation.

Primitive kingship.

Nor was man's primitive sovereignty very different from this. The coarse, materialistic idea of sovereignty which has since developed itself, is a vulgar thing in the light of primeval, and especially, in the light of redeemed, manhood. Primitive kingship was substantially *humanity itself*, together with its position in respect to everything mundane. But its glory still was its status with the Creator, and the blessings of his favour and

fellowship. Man's kingship was just the rank the Creator had assigned him in the grand heraldry of his intelligent universe, and the purposes which he meant to carry out and to emblazon in the history of humanity.

Evangelical kingship.

The evangelical privilege of kingship is something *indigenous in the filial relation*, and may not be supposed to lie merely, or chiefly, in any *extraneous* direction.

Daniel's prophecy.

Nor may Daniel's prophecy of the fifth monarchy be pleaded against this view, because, though it be by its collation with the great monarchies which it supplanted, of a political structure; yet it cannot be so interpreted in the face of history, and especially, of the New Testament. In truth, there is no political antithesis intended by their juxtaposition, but simply that Power is wielded in one instance by Paganism, and in the other by Christianity. When the saints are said to 'take the kingdom, and to possess it for ever and ever,'[1] and that commensurately with the boundary of the world, we are surely not to understand the literal rise of an universal empire in the universal extension of what is called the Catholic Church, including all the nationalities of earth subjected to its sway, agreeably to the Romish programme. A much grander idea presents itself to us—that of *the monarchy of religion itself*, overshadowing all lands, pervading all people, and becoming the *one tutelary Power of the whole national and social life of man.*

This is the primitive idea of man's sovereignty as contained in the divine patent, 'Let him have

[1] Dan. vii. 18.

dominion.' The loss of this has given birth to infinite derangements in man's *social* life, as the history of the world exhibits, and to the infinite expedients resorted to for the purpose of, in some measure, compensating for the loss. The true notion of dominion is the evangelical,—'the kingdom of God' restored to the world by Christ in its spiritual glory; embodied in, and extended by the Church, till, rooted in universal man, it gives birth to an order of things the transcript of eternal law, and the reflected image of heaven.

The true kingship spiritual.

It is not expedient, however, to enlarge here on any aspects of church sovereignty pertaining to what is called its *militant state*, or even its millennial glory; but rather, to touch on those higher spheres of this sovereignty, which though more remote, are not the less real, and assuredly, not less glorious. As to these, may we not conceive that an elevation of redeemed men correspondent with their native grace, may chiefly imply a peerless and unchallengeable status of honour and glory? May we not understand it of *rank* in the usual sense of that word, with all its appropriate conditions? Are not princes such by blood, by throne-relations, and by throne-honours which stand quite apart from territorial sway, and prescriptive spheres of prerogative?

By this suggestion, however, it is not meant to intimate, that the perfected glory of 'the sons of God' *excludes* everything like these correlatives, but that they are too far removed from even reasonable conjecture, at present; and that they are not a necessary part of the estimate we are entitled to form of the destiny of the Church.

Surely, to be 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,' must immeasurably surpass the most exalted conceptions of the possible relations of the Church to the universe. Even worlds, here, are verily as the small 'dust of the balance,' and to be accounted 'less than nothing and vanity.'

May it not be lawful when endeavouring to illustrate a subject like this, to seek truth in the responses of our very constitution? For instance, what is the love of honour in man—what his deathless aspiration after glory,—but the perverse renderings by his fallen nature of the transcendent yearnings of his *divine* constitution? What means the pride of family? or the elation felt in illustrious pedigree—the soul-swelling consciousness of honourable blood? These are by no means conventional or acquired feelings of our manhood; for they are shared alike by the savage and the civilised man, and can never be separated by political arithmeticians, or philosophical levellers, from the deep grain of human nature itself. All this shows that man was made for *honour and glory* in a sense he was not made for other things. These are still the highest things of the world, and are, like the milky way of the heavens, but the reflected light of orbs unseen, and the faint, stray rays of a *residuary light* in man, which amidst all his darkness and degradation, will not suffer him to forget that his origin and destiny are higher than the heavens.

Sense in which the saints judge the world.

The passage (1 Cor. vi. 2) in which the saints are said to 'judge the world,' and even 'angels,' cannot be fairly urged against this view, since the work of judgment in its application both to the

world and to angels, must be the exclusive prerogative of Christ: 'All judgment is committed unto the Son.' It is plainly impossible, not to say impious, to imagine that this most dread prerogative can be shared by 'the saints,' or by any creatures whatsoever; it is the incommunicable right of the Mediator. What then does the apostle mean, but that the *position* 'the saints' will occupy amid the last scenes of judicial glory is that arising from a *brotherly relation to the Judge himself* which entitles them to be regarded as assessors in the judgment—*assessors*—that is, persons forming the retinue of the Judge, and the counterpart of his office. Unquestionably, this is the highest view of the kingly glory of 'the saints' in relation to the universe; but it is still one of *mere honour, not of office or function of any kind.* Judgment can only appertain to them in the way of witnessing it,—of approving the sentences delivered by the Judge himself, and of ratifying them by such tokens of confirmation as may be licensed amidst so august a spectacle. They do not so much as aid in carrying these sentences into execution, for this office is assigned to the angels: *their* part in the judgment, therefore, is but similar to that which the dignitaries of an empire may be supposed to bear in judicial procedures of the sovereign required by some great state crisis. They enforce these by their presence and cordial concurrence. Or it may be likened to that of persons who, attending on the proceedings of human justiciaries, endorse by their sympathies with the claims of justice, the utterances which bring doom on criminals, or which vindicate innocency.

It is further for our purpose to show that the

Position and ministry of angels.

scripture notices of angels and their ministry, when collectively taken, yield us a distinct idea of their *subordinate* position to that of redeemed men in the kingdom of God. For, while the distinctions of rule noted by such words as 'thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers,' do certainly augur high and diverse dignities among them, these are to be construed as correlatives to each other as beings of a particular order, but import nothing as to the rank which the order itself bears within the economy of the universe. These distinctions may arise either out of original endowment, or the rewards of service; or, very consistently, from both. But the question is not touched by these admissions, what relations they occupy to beings of *other orders*, if we suppose the whole universe classified.

The name angel is one of office, not of nature, and bears on its forehead the label of the servant. That the powers of angels are exceedingly wonderful, and their departments of service exceedingly broad and diversified, is unquestionable; but the whole tenor of scripture testimony respecting them seems intended to fix our view of them as purely *ministerial*. They are grand natures bearing grand executive commissions from God, which have all been transferred to the kingdom of the Mediator; but their whole history so far as it is bound up with that of man, runs on in the same channel of subserviency to the purposes of his redemption, and never appears to merge into, much less to transcend, the position assigned to him.

The Old Testament narratives of their appearances and succours to individuals or the Church, surprise us by the seeming disparity of the ministry

with the objects of it. The angel, or the host that ever and anon is seen to descend from heaven to earth, lend themselves with earnestness to the service of a solitary man, the rescue of a nation, or the frustration of stratagems against the interests of religion, and the weal of mankind. The address of the angel to Daniel is particularly touching, 'O man, greatly beloved;' it opens to us the great mystery of that all-impelling power to the wheels of Providence as to those of Redemption itself—the love of God to man.

The kingship pertains to the redeemed.

The impression of the ministry of angels derived from the Scriptures, is that of the strangest phenomenon short of the God-man himself. It is the befitting counterpart of the *religion of redemption* that such an order of beings should be earnestly intent on doing service to so humble a creature as man, instead of subsisting in their own lofty separation from earth with its scenes of confusion and apostasy, in realms, which one would think, far more congenial with their endowments and happiness. The key to this singular fact is indubitably supplied in the history of the Incarnate One and his redemption. THE KINGSHIP IS OURS, NOT THEIRS: they share not His brotherhood: they partake not of His nature; nor are they the ransomed of His blood. These are all transcendental things, appertaining to no patent of Creation, and the rewards of no services whatsoever. They create their own heavens and earth—their own universe of privilege, honour, and felicity, which can never be expanded beyond the race which centres in 'the Son of God,' and is for ever overshadowed with the glory of His fellowship.

Looking once more at the 8th Psalm under its

twofold aspect of primeval and redeemed manhood, we see the angels brought out in a way strikingly pertinent to the present inquiry. First, we have human nature in its unfallen head, 'made for a little while lower than the angels,'—that is, so long as it remained in its infancy, undeveloped by moral discipline and experimental appliances—short of its capacity, and short of its ultimate destiny. Thus far was man 'made lower than the angels,' but yet destined in the career of his future, not merely to rise to an equality with them, but to surpass them. The initiatory stage of humanity during which this inferiority was to last, was, if we take it to refer to the interval between the creation and the fall of man, or between that of his fall and his final elevation by Redemption, but 'a little while.' The Psalm ushers in the state of elevation by Redemption, first in the person of Christ; then, in the collective persons of his Church. 'He is crowned with glory and honour;'—he passes into a state of distinction and felicity which places him far more in advance of the angels than he had ever been below them. The relations of his nature are so entirely altered by the person and work of the Redeemer as to carry our thoughts to a height where all is lost in the light of Divinity, as when we trace the career of the same Being from the manger of Bethlehem to the summit of the heavens.

St Paul's argument on the 8th Psalm.

A great addition is made both to the clearness and breadth of our view of the doctrine of this Psalm by collating it with that portion of the epistle[1] which lies around it, and observing that it is introduced for the purpose of completing the

[1] Heb. ii. 6.

apostolic view of the supremacy of the Mediator. If we take the argument for that supremacy as running through the entire first chapter and the larger part of the second, the steps adopted for reaching the conclusion appear to consist of a series of comparisons between Christ and the angels. With these comparisons, however, so far as they are simply based on the doctrine of his Godhead implied in his very name Son, and the angels as creatures of God, it is not our purpose to deal. The argument on these premises is directly patent. But it seems to us, that as the apostle manifestly includes in his argument *more than the divinity of Christ*,—namely, *his entire person as Mediator*, so this fact must not be overlooked, if we would discern the breadth and fulness of his conclusions. The human nature of Christ as a constituent of his entire person, must be adequately, though subordinately, represented in the argument, which is meant to carry certain consequences in the sequel more expanded. In other words, the *double filiation* comprised in our Lord's person human and divine, must be included, and not one or the other nature merely. For instance, he is said 'by himself to have purged our sins,' and then to have 'sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.' He is said to have been 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows'—an expression certainly not interpretable of his *divine nature*, but of his human; and finally, he is said to sit at God's 'right hand until his enemies are made his footstool.' Here we see, not only the Son of God, but the Son of David—that is, the human nature 'crowned with glory and honour.' In this latter relation then, as well as in

the former, his supremacy over the angels is made manifest; for while he *as man*, is enthroned at God's right hand, the angels as a body are but 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.'[1] Thus the *human nature* of Christ is on the throne—the angelic nature, as the serving nature, is *beneath*.

This statement of the question fully harmonizes with the doctrine of the Psalm as opened in the following chapter: 'What is man?' for here the comparison still runs on between the serving position of the angels, and the ruling position of the man. Nor is this comparison at all affected by any interpretation that may be given of the words, 'For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come of which we speak;' although, notwithstanding the opinion that 'the world to come' means the Messianic dispensation, we think the context here, and in other instances in which it occurs, settles it otherwise,—namely, of the world to come as synonymous with the new creation, or final order of things to emerge out of that which is passing away. In fact, this view perfectly agrees with other and equivalent phrases, about the meaning of which there can be no mistake, whether from the lips of the Lord, or of his apostles. Take these instances: 'He hath never forgiveness, either in this world, or the world to come.'[2] 'He shall receive manifold more in the present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting.'[3] So St Paul: 'And every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.'[4] These citations must be held

[1] Heb. i. 14. [2] Matt. xii. 32. [3] Luke xviii. 30. [4] Eph. i. 21.

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conclusive as to the sense of the phrase 'the world to come.'

Men the paramount order in the final state.

What then is the doctrine here taught? Is it not the non-subjection of the world to come to angels, but its subjection to the God-man? Is it not that in the profounder regions of the invisible universe (future with respect to us), and in the final state of consummation which is the grand issue of mediation, *men, not angels, are the paramount order of beings?* The eternal subjection of the latter answers to the name, angel. Though servants sufficiently glorious to constrain the worship of the beloved disciple, yet still are they servants, not KINGS within that kingdom which 'ruleth over all.' In this, as well as in Jacob, the theocracy is a splendid peculiarity by no means commensurate with the universe, as the other was not with the world. It does not include angels, but only 'the elect,' the human department of the universe gathered into the Son of God, and by his reflected filiation made 'bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.'

This may, perhaps, suffice for an exposition of the apostolic argument as it culminates in the extract from the 8th Psalm: but if anything were yet wanting, a glance at the verses consecutively following gives us whatever addition this conclusion may require. 'For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.'[1] Here, the office and the experience of the Redeemer stand immediately related to the safe-conduct of the 'sons

[1] Heb. ii. 10.

to glory.' The glory is to be interpreted of the *paternal* glory, to which we have before referred, and with which the Redeemer himself is said to be 'crowned,' after having been made 'perfect through suffering.' This 'glory,' then, is as to the 'sons' spoken of, a *filial* glory, or an estate of royalty proper to man as he is in Christ, but not to the 'ministering spirits who minister to these heirs of salvation.' The following verse finishes this extended and sublime statement: 'For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one,' *i.e.*, of one human nature, one stock or race; 'for which cause, he is not ashamed' (notwithstanding his Godhead), 'to call them brethren.'

The elders of the Apocalypse represent the redeemed.

A brief reference to the testimonies of the Apocalypse concludes the discussion of this subject. Placed on the same stand-point as the apostle in the vision of the opened heavens, who are the crowned Elders whom we behold clothed in 'white raiment,' and seated in wondrous proximity to the throne of the Eternal? Certainly they cannot be regarded as the representatives of the angelic host, but of redeemed men. As of old the elders represented the Jewish nation by courses of twenty-four in the temple-worship, so in the vision before us, the Elders represent the race or nation of the true Israel of God,—the universal Church. And as, in the former instance, the Elders were by hereditary rank princes in the holy commonwealth, and appeared in their places wreathed with the appropriate tiaras of their phylarchies; so in heaven the Elders appear with their 'crowns of gold,' to denote that they are the princes of God's people, 'born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man,

but of God.'[1] In this view, their worship is the worship of princes or satraps offered to the supreme Sovereign. Their crowns are but the reflected glory of One alighting upon them from the inaccessible heights, 'dark with excessive bright,' where they delight to cower. The position of the Elders thus symbolically described, differs essentially from that of the angels given elsewhere. In their case, position as to the throne, is more distant; no *crowns* are seen upon their heads; none are cast beneath the footstool of the Divine Majesty when they worship; they are simply said to fall upon their faces, and to join in the universal song—'Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.'[2]

Thus, too, in the fifth chapter, the 'four and twenty Elders' again appear offering a solemn act of adoration to the Lamb when he takes the mystic book from 'Him that sits upon the Throne:' this is followed by their 'new song,' in which, after celebrating his praise for the work of their redemption, and the dignity conferred upon them as 'kings and priests unto God,' they solemnly prognosticate their 'reign upon the earth.'

Without dwelling on the fact that angels are here again placed in a relation to the Elders and the Throne in perfect agreement with all that has been previously stated, we pass to the notice of the fulfilled prediction of the Elders as to the final sphere of their reign—'the earth.' (It is not necessary here to do more than advert to the version given of the millennial epoch recorded in the 20th

[1] John i. 13. [2] Rev. vii. 12.

chapter of this book, since it is adduced merely in corroboration of the sovereignty of the saints.) There, thrones and judgment are given unto them, whatever may be the nature and scope of their jurisdiction, or the form of their sovereignty. They are not represented as *serving*, but as *reigning*—reigning with Christ himself 'a thousand years.'

The Church the New Jerusalem.

Then as to the visions which form the conclusion of the book, and which are clearly posterior to the Millennium, the Resurrection, and the Judgment, they combine to give prominency to this one idea—the surpassing honour of the Church when raised to its glorified condition. The Church, for instance, is 'Jerusalem,' by far the most wonderful city that ever graced the earth, as it was 'the city of the great King,' the Zion, whose gates the Lord loved 'more than all the dwellings of Jacob.' 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!'[1] The Church is this Jerusalem renewed, purified, and glorified. The primary idea, the rudiment, the *morale* of Jerusalem, are eternal things—the divine programme or pattern of things in the heavens. Jerusalem was pre-eminently the city of 'kings and priests unto God.'

Moreover, this 'New Jerusalem,' descending from heaven, has 'the glory of God,' the peculiar honour and treasure of that ancient city, as this had been of Israel when traversing the wilderness. It was enshrined in the temple, broke through the vail, and flooded its courts with a light brighter than the sun. This glory appertains to the 'New Jerusalem' for ever. *There*, there is no need of the

[1] Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

sun or of the moon; 'the Lord God giveth it light, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'

Further, this 'New Jerusalem' is 'the Bride:' this is its peculiar honour; still, however, but a *transcript* of that of the first Jerusalem, though immeasurably more glorious. Here, the very name the Bride signifies a *human parity with Christ himself* founded on a oneness of nature, and a transmission of his glories to his Church. This answers to the mystery of marriage, and to the patent of the primitive ordinance; for *co-regency*, though in agreement with the relation which makes an unity out of differences, is, nevertheless, the prerogative of marriage. Dominion lies in both, or in the jointure, not in one or other of the parties joined. This, again, is a decisive argument for the sovereignty of the Church: her relation to Christ is essentially a *ruling* one—his people are PRINCES, not servants.

God dwelling with man, the first and last truth of redemption.

Finally, looking at the promises of the Father himself, which form the preface to the vision of the glorified Church, as well as its sequel, we can hardly fail to detect the grand truth of the Kingship. The following passages are instances: 'And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.' And again, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.'[1] As to the former passage, the voice is heard from heaven immediately on the descent of the 'New Jerusalem' to earth; by which coincidence we are taught that the Church in its glorified state is to

[1] Rev. xxi. 3, 7.

Him what the tabernacle and congregation of Israel were in days of old. Here, too, we trace the verity of the oracle, 'God requireth that which is past,' since this early manifestation of himself to the sons of Israel was, as it here appears, a figure of the last truth of the universe, and of the highest form of church beatitude. This dwelling with men is the first and last thing in the grand economy of human redemption; and, as it is here put, is no other than a reiteration of St Paul's doctrine in descriptive language—'that God may be all in all.' In the early tabernacle and relation of God with his people here referred to, the *Word* was the Deity more immediately concerned; but in this last tabernacle of God the 'New Jerusalem' descended from heaven to earth, the FATHER-GOD is pre-eminent: 'HE will dwell with them, and be their God, and they shall be his people.' The fulness of his manifestation shall be resident in the Church, and from the Church be reflected to the universe.

As to the second passage, its very terms are self-exponent: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.' Here, also, the words are not those of the Mediator, but of the Father covenanting to recognise the enduring disciple of Christ as *his* '*son*,' and to crown him with an inheritance of *supremacy*. Here, too, we have but another form of reiterating St Paul,—'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CHURCH—ITS GLORY.

The Priesthood.

Relation between the priesthood and the kingship,

PRIESTHOOD, like kingship, is derived to the Church from the filial dignity, that grand pre-eminence which entails upon it the whole patrimony of creature-glory. The Church, like the ancient Israel, bears the dignity of the 'first-born,' and is thus 'registered in heaven.' In Scripture, the regal and priestly offices are almost constantly conjoined, from Genesis to Revelation. This marked coincidence has its foundation in their natural relation to each other. In the beau-ideal of society, the governing power is entwined with the sacerdotal, because Government is, in fact, the delegated rule of Heaven, and should be invested, therefore, with the highest sanctions and influences of Religion. Hence, it has been always felt that the stability of government depended much more upon the religious than the temporal sanction. Whatever theory, or form of government may have been selected by a people, it has always been found expedient to enlist the *priesthood* in the service of the State, both in ancient and modern times. Thus, we may assume it as settled by universal consent, that the spiritual and the temporal administrations are natural allies, and ought in some mode or other to be made co-opera-

tive. Thus, every king is, by implication at least, a priest, and every priest a king, since, assuredly, that power must be intrinsically the most sovereign which constrains the conscience, and overshadows men with the sanctions of God's rule.

Hence the supremacy of the Papacy; and hence our national motto, 'Church and State.' Under the law, this conjunction was remarkable. Not unfrequently did the high priest conjoin in himself the functions of both secular and spiritual ruler; he was at all times the greater power in the commonwealth, inasmuch as the priesthood was *fundamental* to the State, while the monarchy was a *late graft* upon it. Moses solemnly inaugurated the priesthood, but made no 'king in Jeshurun.' The Lord himself was their King. His throne was in the tabernacle, and his Court were the priests.

under the Theocracy;

It is perhaps, somewhat difficult for us to define the precise relations which subsisted between the priesthood and the magistracy in the ages of the monarchy; but it is clear that they were very closely connected with each other, and that, in some instances at least, such as those of David and Solomon, the acts of the monarch were, as we should say, semi-sacerdotal. Still, a line was drawn between them; nor could any of the great acts of the priesthood ever be touched by the prince. This may enable us to form a tolerably reasonable conjecture as to the controversy which sprang up between Uzziah and the priests, which ended so disastrously to the king, and which so thoroughly established the exclusive supremacy of the priesthood within its own sphere.

There can be no doubt as to the union of the

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in patriarchal times.

kingly and priestly offices in patriarchal times. Melchizedek is the great example given us in Scripture, which may stand as one of a thousand; while as to tribes and families, it is clear that the double honour always belonged to the first-born. Hence, the oracle in its response to Rebecca announced a paradox—that the 'elder should serve the younger;'[1] and hence, the blessing of which the elder was defrauded by the younger, was, as the whole history of his posterity proves, nothing else than the double honour of the priestly kingship established among the Jewish people, and finally, in the Messiah and his Church.

The priesthood of Christ.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, we have this great double truth with respect to Christ gloriously amplified. It begins with the royalty, and ends with the priesthood. Indeed, the whole doctrine of the epistle is found in such a verse as this, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;'[2] or this, 'This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth, expecting until his enemies be made his footstool.'[3] Thus, the whole epistle to the Hebrews may be designated a compendium of the doctrine of the theocracy and of the prophets, summed up in that one testimony of Zechariah, 'He shall be a priest on his throne.'[4]

Nor can we forget that this is the great doctrine of the Apocalypse, which shows us the LAMB upon the THRONE. It is necessary to advert to these truths with respect to Christ, if we would perceive

[1] Gen. xxv. 23.
[2] Heb. i. 3.
[3] Heb. x. 12.
[4] Zech. vi. 13.

the force of John's testimony, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever.'[1] This ascription was caught from the song of the hierarchy, as it pealed upon his ears when rapt in the heavens, 'And hath made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.'[2]

The priesthood of the Church the reflection of Christ.

Here we see, as in other instances, that the honours of the Church are not only *bestowed* upon it by Christ, but that they are the reflections of his own: they descend to it by its relation to him as 'the head of the body.' His glories are transmitted to them and through them to the universe. Thus, relatively, the kingship and the priesthood, like the sonship and the nature, are all one, as the head and the body are one. The body and its members are but the collective functions, in and through Christ, of one royal priesthood; and all their mysterious services prolonged through eternity, are but the returns of *His one office and service as the divine embodiment of man.*

It is this view of the oneness of Christ with his Church (doubtless, the great truth intended by the figure of the headship and the body) that enables us in some degree to grasp the sublime reality of their relation unto God, and of God's relation unto them, which necessarily imply his unfolded fulness as the Father-God. There are, there can be, no higher creature glories than these; for they are *Christ's own shared by his brethren*, reflected back upon himself, and by himself back upon the

[1] Rev. i. 5, 6. [2] Rev. v. 10.

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Father, as if face to face, in this last great vision of God.

Power of priesthood.

Nor is the history of priesthood unfruitful in illustrations of the same truth; for, throughout the entire history of man, we find the priesthood always uppermost in the gradations of society, and in the sway and destiny of the race. Who can calculate the prestige of the priest in all lands and times? His office and person have been ever venerated, often worshipped. They have been the great rallying-point and fastness of superstition, the trust of nations, and the spell of the world. From the priest the monarch received his crown, and the commonwealth the sanction of its laws. He has not wanted the riches or honours of the world; nor have the greatest princes been content without entwining *his* prerogatives with their own. Before him nations have bowed themselves more abjectly than slaves to their lords. He only has been a law unto himself, and claimed immunities which the most favoured classes of society never dared to claim. His separation from the toils and perils of secular life has not only been freely conceded by the sentiment of nations, but held to be an indispensable qualification to the performance of his sacred duties. Under the law, the Priest and the Levite were detached from all the burdens of ordinary life because they were God's servants, and must be held free to his summons. They had to do with things not pertaining to men, but to God; and had conferred upon them the awful functions of mediators between God and men.

Thus, the priesthood among the Jews was their true aristocracy; and the cast affixed to it by Heaven

Jewish priesthood a shadow of the supremacy of redeemed man.

was the shadow of a far higher truth—namely, *the indelible supremacy which Redemption confers on man in his access to God.* The whole of this arrangement, as it respected the priesthood and its service, bore the stamp of something unearthly, and even superangelic, in the destiny of the Redeemed.

The same truth is shadowed forth in the election of the Jewish nation to bear the name, and to celebrate the worship of Jehovah out of the mass of the darkened world around it. In addition to the ordinance now referred to, the spectacle of a people separated and hallowed by covenant and character, served to illustrate the higher doctrine of the eternal dedication to God of the Church of 'the firstborn written in heaven.'

The Church the priesthood of the world.

The same truth appears with additional splendour in the constitution and purposes of the christian Church. The elect company or congregation, in this sense answerable to the nation in which it originated, bears the highest characters of priesthood. Not ministers alone enjoy this prescriptive appellation—the 'whole body' shares this glory. The Church is an institute reciprocating the very offices of heaven, since it is but 'one body' subsisting in a twofold condition. Its functions, indeed, must be modified by these differences of estate, but the service itself is substantially one. It is lawful for us to regard the terms 'saint' and 'sanctified' as bearing another and equally important meaning to that of purified from sin, namely, consecration or devotement, in a very peculiar sense, to God. As in the prophecy it is said, 'Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God,'[1]—

[1] Isaiah lxi. 6.

ye shall be regarded as bearing a pre-eminently *consecrated* character, and not merely as holy in the sight of God. Thus, is the Church of Christ to be regarded as the temple, the priesthood, and the worshipping community of the whole world. The Church holds, by virtue of the calling and anointing of its members, the patent of worship, the privilege of access, the offices of prayer and intercession. It is the reflex of the unseen things of Mediation in heaven, the unfailing memorial of Redemption, the witness for Christ and for God in the midst of the earth. The Church at once represents the Mediator and the world, which it sanctifies and blesses, however circumscribed in itself, and however territorially or morally inadequate to pervade and assimilate the world. Without the Church, Revelation itself had become defunct; without its labours, the empire of the Cross must fail to be established; and without its intercessions, the Spirit that renews the world is omnipotence restrained.

The priesthood of the Church everlasting.

Passing from the present to the future life, the priesthood of the Church, like that of its Founder and Head, is everlasting: 'They serve him day and night in his temple;'[1] they verify in the eternal light of that realm the prescribed routine of the ancient worship, which, as a type of this, had its night services added to those of the day—emulous of the untiring sun in his course, and the untiring energy of spirits disburdened of the flesh.

The priests not innocent, but purified.

It was, too, a fact pregnant with interest, that the priesthood was solemnly inaugurated of old by the blood of atonement, as well as by water applied to the person: these made the double fount of its

[1] Rev. vii. 15.

consecration, like that mingled current which flowed from the Crucified himself. All this is verified in the Church viewed as a priesthood, both on earth and in heaven. It does not represent *innocency*, but *guilt cancelled, and uncleanness purified.* The Church is no embodiment of *native* glories, but of recovered fortunes and superadded endowments surpassing those of every order of being beyond its own. Of all portions of the moral universe, this alone is God's *inheritance*, as it is Christ's *brotherhood.* It is the golden chain of his mediation which has drawn them up to these heights, for ever inaccessible to 'ministering spirits,' or to those who have kept their 'first estate.' The entire commonwealth of the universe is all-glorious, but the PRIESTHOOD 'exceeds in glory;' it inhabits the temple, filling it with fragrant incense and with the melodies of song; casting itself down before the great Father of all things, and in the presence of the Saviour—surcharged as it were, with the riches of his fulness, and returning to him as its source, the transports of loyalty, and the full-pitched harmony of never-dying powers.

The creation of this priesthood the object of redemption.

To form the priesthood of the Creation was the great counsel of redemption, and the great consummation of the Mediator's work. God's universe had been replenished with servants of grades infinitely various, and for purposes all worthy of himself; but his PRIESTS were as yet a desideratum in this glorious empire, to be drawn from the youngest sons of Creation—the children of the dust affiliated by his Son, and sanctified by his cross. *The temple of himself and of his nature* had not yet been opened to the universe, nor the mansions of the INFINITE dis-

closed to the gaze of any creatures however privileged, till the Son left the bosom of the Father. He reared by his humanity and his sacrifice the mystic ladder, by which the children of mortality might ascend—quitting their abodes of pain and sorrow—to the very seat of that glory which he himself had 'before the world was.'

It is, therefore, a weak and crude conjecture which places redeemed men in those posts of dignity for ever vacated by the fallen angels. No gap of this sort, perhaps, needed to be replenished; certainly not by the very peculiar process of human redemption—the stoop of the Son of God to man, his travail and sufferings—and the array of moral omnipotence thence issuing for his rescue. All this seems to augur more than the repairing of a loss: it is the production of something *new*, not to be compassed by the mere exertion of omnipotence, but by a procedure bearing no analogy whatever with the course of the past. The creation of *the priesthood* made necessary the most intimate relation of Deity to the person of its 'Great High Priest;' while the relation also to him of all the members of that priesthood as the Levites of his ministry, required the bond of nature and sacrifice to constitute him their representative and head.

Thus the Church is the priesthood of the universe, bearing a definite, though as yet undisclosed, relation to all orders of existence. The figure of this truth is unquestionably given us in the history of man's creation, and in his obvious mundane position. He was meant to be the priest of the world, and in this capacity to embody and impart utterance to all the creatures about and beneath him.

His was the glory of leading up the creatures to the altar of the Most High, and of ministering on their behalf as well as his own, the sacrifices of praise in the midst of this glorious temple. The priesthood of *the world* is the heritage of man in Adam; the priesthood of *the universe* is the heritage of man in Christ. Born from above, and robed in the vestments provided for him by his Redeemer, he is finally introduced into the temple 'not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' His sphere of ministry is that of Christ himself, and his service the counterpart of that of the God-man.

Jerusalem, in type and antitype, a city of priests.

Turning once again to the last chapter of the Apocalypse, we see in the vision of the 'New Jerusalem' the image of these most exalted truths; for what was the Jerusalem of history but the city of the temple and the priesthood?—not so much the metropolis of the nation, as it was the grand focus of Religion's glory in the gatherings of its people, and the celebration of its worship. Thus the 'New Jerusalem' is a sacred city; there the priesthood is centered, and the glory of God is its light. John saw 'no temple therein,' because 'the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.' No representation of any past scenes of earth or of the universe, but those of the Gospel only, could set forth this last and highest truth of existence—GOD HIMSELF THE TEMPLE OF HIS WORSHIPPERS. It seems as if all outer courts reared up through times and dispensations,—by worlds, and initiatory processes of the divine wisdom and holiness, had been all swept away,—every veil of the past, and every type of the future made to vanish for ever before the infinite realities of the Godhead! These, opened

to the universe by the Mediator, are made profoundly accessible to the creatures and ministers of THE ATONEMENT, as the sole order of beings, like Moses, privileged to enter 'the thick darkness where God is,' or rather the light which repels all other faces from its threshold.

The Cherubim the symbol of the glorified Church.

In this connection, it may be befitting to append an observation or two on the doctrine of that mysterious, symbolic being—the Cherubim. Whatever difficulties surround its successful interpretation, one thing is evident, that as a symbol it had no peculiar connection with the Law; for it ushered in the earliest dispensation of redemption; and in the Apocalypse it is seen to survive the wrecked glories of the temple. It is a fact, too, of great significance, that while the Old Testament abounds in notices of the Cherubim, the historic and doctrinal portions of the New entirely omit them. Can this be explained, except on the hypothesis, that of this, as well as of every other of the earlier symbols of revealed religion, Christ and the Church are the 'hidden wisdom'? Moreover, the fact that in Old Testament descriptions God is said to have dwelt 'between the Cherubim,' or to have ridden on the Cherubim; and that he is also represented as enthroned amid them, is singularly indicative of the New Testament mystery of 'the head' and 'the body the Church,' inasmuch as the great scope of all the promises and provisions of redemption is *the indwelling of God in man*, and the proximity of the Redeemed to the sphere of his glory. Their nature is the creation of the Atonement; and their ministry, winged from its fulness, and sunned with its love, is, and ever will be, in 'the holiest of all.' 'Hav-

ing therefore boldness, brethren,' says St Paul, 'to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.'[1] The properties of various creatures are appropriately made symbolic of the powers of glorified men, just as in the prophetic visions we have similar symbols of political power.

Then, too, there is the great office assigned to the Cherubim of choristers in the temple of heaven, and the wondrously emphatic antiphon ascribed to them by Isaiah: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.' Undoubtedly, all this bespeaks the human voice—the rapt sympathies of a nature recovered from sin, and hallowed by the TRIUNE GLORY. Thus, appropriately, earth is said to be 'full,' or 'the fulness of his glory,' rather than heaven,—as if prophetic of human experience and the evangelical doctrine of 'the pleroma' before expounded,—'the fulness of him that filleth all in all;' or, 'that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.' This language of the Cherubim cannot but identify them with *Redemption*, as does also the subjoined notice of their ministry at the altar. John's vision is just the counterpart of Isaiah's, and fixes its meaning as profoundly evangelical. Witness their song after 'the decease' which he accomplished at Jerusalem: 'Thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue.'

In the position of these living ones 'round about the throne,' there is a remarkable agreement between the Apostle and the Old Testament Seer. Their *position* determines the fact that they *fill the highest place in the Creation*. The order is, God—the

[1] Heb. x. 19.

Lamb or Mediator—the Cherubim—or, as we understand it—the Church. In agreement with this, we perceive both the kingship and the priesthood assigned to the Cherubim: they fall down and worship the Lamb, presenting to him the incense of their 'golden vials,' and striking to him their 'harps of gold.' All this is priestly; while their song itself proclaims their kingship, 'We shall reign upon the earth.'

The Elders symbolize the militant Church.

The vision of the Elders (before expounded as also representative of the Church) does not appear to weaken but confirm this view of the Cherubim. It only supposes reasons for a double rather than a single image of so great a truth, and that the latter may have been intended as a key to the former; since in the latter case the higher symbol is dropped for one more easily accessible to our apprehensions; if we may not rather consider the Elders as representatives of the Church in its *earthly*, the cherubim of the Church in its *heavenly*, estate.

But why the adoption of a symbol wrapped in so much mystery? May not the answer be given in the words of Solomon, 'It is the glory of God to conceal a thing'?[1] *i.e.*, not altogether to withdraw it from the field of human cognizance, but to assign it a position in the general perspective of truth in harmony with its general design—not too near—not too remote. Nor can we conceive of any subject to which this doctrine is more applicable than this wonderful destiny of redeemed men, save the mystery of the Godhead itself—'He would hide pride from man.'[2]

[1] Prov. xxv. 2. [2] Job xxxiii. 17.

Their position within the veil.

In support of this conjecture, it is only to be remarked that the position of the Cherubim was *within the veil;* as if to conceal the ultimate glories of redeemed existence from a gaze direct. Placed by the arrangements of the temple within the sphere appropriated by God himself, they prefigured the present *veiled* condition of the Church, together with its sphere of ultimate *life with God* in heaven. This is what St Paul means when he speaks of rejoicing 'in hope of the glory of God;' that is, of the *position of the Cherubim*, on whom the glory of 'the holiest of all' for ever alights in unclouded noon.

TRUTHS EVANGELICALLY REFLECTED.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE FILIAL NATURE.

The proposed investigation of the scripture testimony to the doctrine of mediatorial sovereignty properly terminates with the foregoing chapters, which treat of the glory of the Church. The subjects forming branches of this one capital truth of Revelation, traced out in their natural order, are brought to their last issue in these stupendous contemplations. It is, however, not unlawful, and certainly not without interest, to advert to a class of truths distinctly presented to us in the latter stages of our inquiry, though not formally embraced within the range of its discussion. Whether these are reached by a distinct process of thought, to be recognised either as inductive or otherwise—they are closely related to the matter of Revelation directly considered, and arise out of it whenever broadly and vividly brought before us. These truths may be regarded as *indirect* in order to distinguish them from the *direct* teachings of Revelation, and, for convenience, may be denominated *reflected truths*. It cannot

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be needful to justify this distinction here, since it is one universally admitted, and absolutely necessary to the germinant and perfective characteristics of human knowledge. Philosophy is an extract from facts; and Science is the application of principles gathered from particular classes of facts in quest of others more distant and general, and in order to reach conclusions otherwise impossible. It must not be forgotten that Revelation is *divine thought* placed within the categories of human conception and speech. But though thus limited, it cannot but be indefinitely suggestive, and prone to bear the mind far away from the formal enclosures which it has of necessity adopted for our convenience. Were it otherwise, not only would Revelation hold no affinity with other fields of truth, though itself immeasurably superior to them; it would partially defeat its own object, which is to train redeemed man for converse with the INFINITE; and to lure him by these early lessons on the last things, to match his mind with them, and to connaturalize them with his being, present and to come.

The matter of the following chapters is derived from the application of this principle; and thus, though it may be regarded as supplementary to the subject of the treatise, forms its appropriate conclusion. We do not profess to exhaust the legitimate themes for evangelical discussion; but rather offer illustrative specimens of this field of reflective thought. Hitherto, with the seers of both Testaments, though under a far lower light —our visions have been of 'the Throne;' but ere these melt away, we catch the varied colours of the retiring bow which overarches it—the reflec-

tions of its ineffable light from a firmament divinely attempered to mortal eye.

Peculiarity of man's nature.

The first is an example taken from an article of New Testament theology, ordinarily treated in far too technical and passing a way,—the human nature in its relation to the filial gift. By the light of this doctrine the grand peculiarity of man's nature is demonstrated—ITS PRE-EMINENT CAPACITY FOR GOD. Looking at natures generally, they may be measured for our purpose, by a reference either to their rank as they stand with one another, or their rank as they stand with God. Regarding the former class, it is sufficient to say that they are to be relatively estimated by the different kinds of *force* they exhibit, whether moral, intellectual, or physical. These are their *administrative capabilities*, agreeing with their stations in the great empire of God. They possess certain powers and relations with respect to given departments of it, which adapt them more agreeably to the behests of the Sovereign Will.

Powers of angelic natures.

The beings called angels in Scripture, are uniformly characterized by might, as well as by wisdom and holiness: there are angels of the winds, of the waters, and of the fires. Viewed in these respects, their powers are inconceivable to us—dwarfing ours to an atom in comparison with a mountain. Of force, in certain material or moral aspects, they are centres—like fixed stars which exert an immeasurable command over worlds and realms of space. Take an instance from the Apocalypse: The action of one master-demon is so sustained and ubiquitous over the human race, that his compulsory removal is sufficient to inaugurate an entire change

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in the moral condition of the world. When *he* is bound, the millennial reign begins. This fact is astounding. The counter-fact of his being bound by another angel is, if possible, greater still (if we are to understand it literally),—that a single minister of heaven does exist, able to coerce such a Power as this, whose release from durance is the signal for the setting in of a flood of wickedness once more over the world.

It is probable that other eyes than ours may have unveiled to them the administrative springs of terrene and even celestial affairs—so mighty, ubiquitous, and subtle, as altogether to preclude any conception on our part, of such powers from the observed capacities of our own nature. If pride be hidden from man by the arrangements which provide for all this discharge of creature-energy so deeply veiled from us, our humiliation also is concealed by the remoteness of all such agency from our field of vision; or we might indeed exclaim, 'Lord, what is man, that thou makest account of him!'

We conceive, then, that as to these administrative functions of the universe, man may be altogether distanced in competition with other beings, or be absolutely superseded. He may hereafter have no more to do with them than he has at present, or than his race-action now extends beyond the limits of his own planet. He may be as much shut out of these vast provinces of the Creator's empire, as he is now shut in within the limits of a world expressly fitted up and chartered for his race. It does not follow from the teachings of Scripture, or from any reasonable deductions we are able to make from

this source, that man's nature was meant for greatness in its universe-relations, or that it will at any time become conspicuous within, or cognizant of, these vast outlying domains of Omnipotence. But we have abundant notices in Scripture of the relations of his nature *Godward*.

Man's nature filial.

It may be said, indeed, that this silence as to the universe-relation of man may conclude nothing against its reality; whilst the exclusive direction of inspired teaching to the other and higher aspects of his nature may be resolved by the consideration of a *moral* exigency, to which alone Revelation adapts itself. This, however, is hardly satisfactory, if the distinction between one class of natures and another now set up, be valid; and if, as we take it, the whole scope of the New Testament is decisive as to the *specific character and destiny of human nature*, namely, that it is to be regarded as, in its relation to the Godhead, unique. It is essentially a *filial* nature, and, as such, bears on it an image and superscription revealing its destiny.

Divine personality in Creation.

Looking at Creation generally, we regard it as containing more than the doctrine of the divine nature and attributes as causal of all existence. True, it does not *directly* discover more than this; but with the superadded light of Revelation, we can see far deeper. In Creation there is also the doctrine of a divine personality; and this may be regarded as a projected shadow of the Triune—belts denser, if we may so say, as they are thrown outwards—brighter as we turn inwards.

The New Testament doctrine of Creation by the Son of God is sufficient to supply us with a key to

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the mystery of things. Creation is a *filial work*, and must therefore have on it the image of *paternity*. It is, as a whole, a vast projection of this infinite truth of the divine nature. But where are we to seek its fulness? Plainly, in that nature originally a transcript of the TRIUNE, and by the Incarnation brought into the closest correspondence with the creature. The filial Deity is the Creator of all things: the filial manhood assumed as its correlative, is the representative of this truth as it is in Deity, stamped upon humanity. Here, then, we see the first and last truth of Creation centering in man. He is the image of the TRIUNE; and his redemption is, in fact, but the first truth of his existence ripened under the last sun of heaven.

Man the fulness of Creation.

It is obvious that this truth represented in the Redeemer, and embodied in the Church, comprises the fulness of the divine outgoings in Creation. God is declared most fully by the creature that most fully represents him: this creature must stand nearest to him. This nature must be the *filial*, and no other. This alone is the fulness of the divine image, and forms the temple in which God is manifested to the universe.

Divine in-being man's destiny.

The nature of such a creature cannot imply less than an *in-being in God:* it is constituted with this view, and for this privilege. The filial birth implies an eternal correspondence with its Author, and could not otherwise be answerable to the divine nature, in which *mutual in-being* of the Persons is the ineffable mystery. This doctrine is summed up in the few, but fathomless words of Jesus, 'that they all may be one in us;' and in those other words of his, 'that the love wherewith thou hast

loved me may be in them,' that is, the love inseparable from his own divine Sonship; or in those of St Paul, 'the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.' The meaning of these words is not reached by the ordinary strain of exposition, which refers this love of Christ merely to the benefits of Redemption, apart from the expression of his ineffable filial glory conveyed in these very benefits. This alone justifies the transcendental expression applied to it, 'which passeth knowledge;' and opens to us in the way of obvious sequence, the no less transcendental glory of the Father reflected by the Son in the members of his body mystical, 'that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.'

This view of the destiny of human nature suggests several correlative truths of interest.

The adoption a life, not a relation.

1. It furnishes us with the *rationale* of evangelical knowledge. The filial doctrine alone demonstrates the nature of spiritual knowledge as essentially *experimental*. The 'adoption' is something beyond a mere relation; it is the production of a *life* or *nature* answerable to its Author. It supposes an original status, a power of the soul in an initial measure enjoyed, but forfeited. This is restored with vast accessions by the free gift of God in Christ, in distinction from God in Adam. The term 'adoption,' while reflecting this primitive truth, and borrowed from a social custom appropriate to the illustration of this evangelical grace, is taken up by inspiration, to express both the sovereign freeness of the privilege and its transcendent value. These are its cardinal uses. But the term 'adoption' may mislead us, if determined too closely by its human analogue, since, in this case,

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it might be only *relative*, and not *essential*, as it is in God's use of it. Here there is no sonship in a merely relative and somewhat figurative sense, as the term 'adoption' may be interpreted to imply: it is a veritable *life-giving* to the soul by the communication direct of the *filial nature*, and thus, of the divine image.

The inherent right of the filial state.

Nor does St Paul himself, in a passage not unfrequently cited to prove the *antecedence* of the act of 'adoption' to the bestowment of the filial life, conclude less than this (Gal. iii.): 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son,'—the object of the apostle being, not to assert chiefly the *priority* of the relation as the *ground* of the bestowment of 'the Spirit of adoption,' but rather to show the *inherent right* of the filial state itself to this endowment. It is the inseparable correlative to the relation itself: it is of its very nature, and is infinitely responsive to all its august prerogatives. When, therefore, we resolve the whole mystery of evangelical religion into the origin and development of the sonship, it is but a statement to this effect: that as the filial nature requires for its production and rearing the unfolded mystery of the TRINITY, so the spirit and power of that mystery must concentrate themselves on the processes variously described in the New Testament as 'the kingdom of God' in man.

The knowledge of it intuitive.

Hence, this knowledge so peculiarly evangelical, stands quite apart from all the forms of knowledge derived to man from the world of the sensational, the speculative, or even the moral. It differs even from inspiration as it is usually understood. It is not the knowledge obtained by inference, as of

matter from its properties, or of spirit from its attributes; much less is it a fabric of idealism or sentiment. It is the knowledge proper to *a nature as such*—its very birth, instincts, and intuitions—a reflection in the creature of *the divine self-knowledge* imparted by *in-being*, and a profound sense of the very nature of the great First and Last. Thus is God known—as he cannot otherwise be known—by the transmission through his Son in human nature, *of all that is communicable of* THE INFINITE. This filial nature has its fellowship 'with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The Godhead is the sphere and element of its being—all-pervading—all-transforming—all-replenishing—all-glorifying. It fully reciprocates the challenge of Jesus to his disciples, 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?' (John xiv. 11).

It is this peculiarity which makes it as difficult to define the spiritual as the natural life: both are shrouded from observation, and elude all appliances of the most scrutinizing inquirer. Retiring into the depths of their own essence, they refuse all subjection to the laws of the intellect; whilst they reveal their reality and power, as of things to be *assumed* in accounting for the whole range of phenomena appropriate to both.

The happiness peculiar to man.

2. This view of the sonship opens to us the nature of spiritual enjoyment, or *the happiness peculiar to man*. That happiness is simply filial, and consists in its *birth-love*, moulding all its emotional capabilities, and inspiring it with sympathies and habitudes which tend perpetually to carry it upward to a complacent rest in the bosom of the INFINITE. The life of this 'new creature' is, and must be,

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LOVE. It expatiates and expands for ever in this highest glory of the INFINITE, and finds in this alone that joint heirship with Christ, which is the confluence of all the promises, as rivers of joy lost in the ocean of limitless love.

It need hardly be said that this is the highest reach of human felicity, because the filial nature out of which it flows, determines it to be GOD'S VERY OWN. In the New Testament, when Jesus pours forth his sublimest utterances, they are always surcharged with the glory of love as his own patrimony: 'Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world;'—a patrimony to be inherited by his followers: 'That thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.' (John xvii. 28.) The mutual in-being of the Father and the Son cannot but imply an infinite mutual complacency; or, in other words, a love reciprocated by the TRIUNE, which gives to the words of John their incomparable sublimity—'GOD IS LOVE.'

By no other view than this were it possible for us to apprehend this wonderful summary of all beatitude, even as it is in God himself. Here again we trace in Creation, generally, the outgushings of this eternal Fountain of Love. As it is the work of the filial God, so is it the work of filial love; and God's pleasure in it is but the reflection of that oracle more than once dropped from the heavens: 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee am I well pleased.'

Creation a perfect image of higher truths.

The image of this truth is variously depicted in our world and its creatures, as if it were meant to prepare the way for its grand enthronement in the nature and destiny of man. For is not this the law

of perpetuated successional life, from the lowest creatures to the highest instinct with it—combining to give it utterance even where not found in alliance with the higher powers of the reflective reason? Creation, instead of being thrown back by an originating fiat to an immeasurable distance, leaving us to resolve it into the operations of a First Cause—not of commanding personality—perpetuates itself *in every instance of life by presenting us with the links of paternity and filiation;* while in man, and the laws of his race-traduction, this is accompanied with *a perfect image of the higher truths* which the New Testament is meant to enthrone *in the filial nature of the Redeemed.*

Man the creature of love.

Man is throughout the creature of love; and the various forms in which love is developed in his history, are singular types of the all-plastic power to which the universe, but more especially man himself, owes his being and destiny. As without the affections there could be no life, so without the affections there could be no *happiness.* Love is to man what salt is to the taste, or the soul to the body. Nor are we at a loss to perceive how its potent circulation through the world from the fount of the Cross—deeper than that of nature—would act as streams in a desert, or as sunbeams to the production of a paradise.

To the soul, the filial nature opens an eternal correspondence with Him who is infinitely BLESSED, because He is INFINITE LOVE. *The Triune Nature is the demonstration of this.* When we speak of attributes, and of benevolence as among the brightest of them, what do we but predicate certain properties only of a nature which has the infinite mystery of

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its affection *redundant from itself to the creatures*, but chiefly to the Church, lodged in this ineffable intercommunion of the PERSONS, not in the mere UNITY? And when we speak of blessedness in the creature, what other notion can we form of it than that it is the participation, true, though limited, of the fellowship of this Infinite THREE-ONE NATURE, by virtue of its filiation through the Incarnate One?

Probable characteristic of the future state.

It may be allowable to suggest here, whether these views of the filial nature and its blessedness may not more strongly indicate than we are accustomed to suppose possible, the form or leading characteristic of man's final life. Is it not probable that this must be *the counterpart of its divine endowments*, alike distinguished by simplicity and concentration on the great Alpha and Omega? Its whole being may be supposed to be such a realization of oneness with the INFINITE as produces an eternal sabbath of all the faculties; little needing for the fullest enjoyment of existence such a world as ours, teeming with immeasurable devices of materialism, both for the production and sustenance of the meanest creature, as well as for those of the august life of man. Nothing is more singular than that such an infinity of items should be necessary to constitute and carry on our present life—so much that is intricate and elaborate in its surroundings, as well as in its structure—so much that is in the highest sense, artistic, wondrously perfect, yet as wondrously contingent. In short, a whole creation is made necessary to the production and evolution of such a race as ours. This is all admirable in its place, and suited to the infancy and rearing of so peculiar a nature as ours; but it by no means

answers even to our low ideal of what life *might be*—nay, of what life *must be*, when the filial glory shall be revealed in us.

Independence of materialism.

The fact of the extinction of life as it now is, as preliminary to its future regeneration, shows 'that the former things have passed away,' and that the new and perfect order of things to succeed, while it annuls them, is totally different. The spirit of the Gospel, which looks with so much coldness, we might almost say aversion, on the glories of the world—suggesting, as the full ideal of a disciple, an almost sternly philosophic renunciation of everything beyond the decent necessities of life—points in the same direction; namely, that there is a life, a human life in reserve, where this complicated dependence, and vast array of ministering creatures to its well-being, shall be done away with, and the plan and attributes appertaining to it shall more thoroughly indicate self-sufficiency, or rather, the sufficiency derived to it for ever from the INFINITE.

Joy in God.

'Lamps of fire' were seen by John burning before the throne; cherubim spread their wings, and uttered their voices amid the excellent glory: the sea of crystal which reflects that high throne, reflects also their forms together with it. Palms are raised, and harps are strung; music's loftiest, sweetest strains pour forth from countless millions of joyous lips; the chorus rises, and, with its cadence, the glorified throng is prostrate in devotion. All is simple as childhood, joyous as holiday, unmixed in emotion, as the very river of life from which they drink is without alloy. All social sympathies thrill from one centre, and this mighty body of filial soul, like the heart of one man, recreates

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itself by the ceaseless round of these divine employs, and ever returns to the great Fountain of being, as clouds to the ocean after they are discharged, to seek fresh burdens of glorious joy with which to return their tribute to the great THREE-ONE.

The filial nature throws light on the dispensations.

3. This view of the filial nature may assist us to form a more comprehensive judgment on the relative influences of the *several dispensations* of the Redeemer's kingdom. Our doctrine obliges us to assume the gift of the filial nature to man by creation. We understand this as plainly comprised in the words, 'Let us make man in our image.' Further, it seems patent that the gift of this nature and knowledge to man formed the basis of the temptation by which he fell; for in that temptation the lure to disobedience was the false promise that they should become 'as gods,' or as the Elohim. This implies that the knowledge of the TRIUNE was then in man's possession; that his own relation to it was also matter of consciousness; and that the prospect of some wonderfully high destiny, as the result of this relation, had already fired his thought. All this is plainly implied in the temptation. The result, as we know, was that of all falsehood,—calamitous disappointment. The end was not to be obtained at the beginning, much less by an act of transgression. A *fall* instead of a *promotion* ensued, mercifully relieved, it is true, by the promise of the Redeemer, but still leaving the pristine condition of man greatly in advance of subsequent experience.

The sonship common to them all;

We have more than one notice that in early times there were on earth persons designated 'the sons

of God.' The name was also bestowed on the seed of Israel. We have likewise many incidental allusions to it both in the Pentateuch and in the prophetic writings; yet we have St Paul's broad testimony in the Galatians (iv. 5), to the effect that under the Law at least (if not antecedently), 'the spirit of bondage' prevailed; and that the children differed nothing from servants, till 'the fulness of the time was come.' Indeed, it is not to be conceived that the grand privilege of this 'fulness of the time' was *antedated*, even in exceptional cases; much less that the whole religious mind of the world, through all these intervening centuries, approximated to it, any more than it has done during the ages which have linked the advent with our own time. The glory of the Gospel itself was long obscured, and the really religious mind of the professing Church must have been in the same condition. On the other hand, if the original filial dignity of man be true, and the redemptional grace which at once retrieves and exalts it be also filial, it must follow that the whole of this mass of religious mind, as well early as late—Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian, or even Heathen—must in some way or other have obtained *the same grace*, unless we suppose them to have sunk *below the original condition* of manhood; or that, finally there will be more than one church or mystic body of the Redeemer. As neither of these positions is for a moment tenable, all this mind must have been gathered into the 'one body' the Church, and have received 'the adoption,' notwithstanding the disparities of dispensational relations.

This certainty, then, raises the question, how or where could this have been obtained? The answer

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but reserved for the separate state.

is, in the future life, not on earth. This *promotion* must have taken place within the veil, and greeted these departed spirits, as there opened to them one or other of those 'many mansions' of the Father's house prepared for his earth-born family. This truth seems to be established both by the language of Christ, which affirms that the patriarchs and prophets are together 'in the kingdom of God;' and by the words in Hebrews (xi. 39, 40), 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises,' or 'the promise:' 'God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.' What their faith taught them to hope for in a future life, God had forecasted to bestow on us in the present, namely, the *filial grace;* to which exposition the added reason is pertinent, 'that they without us should not be made perfect;' that is, that they should ascend to our point of the scale, not we to theirs. Our style of life as 'the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,' is that to which they are conformed even in that higher state into which they have entered, *which altogether depends for its existing perfection on that after grace which flows down from the Incarnate One* into those united with him. In this sense the spirits of even 'just men are made perfect.'

The kingdom of Christ in heaven and on earth, one.

We now seem to obtain a glimpse of the true though wider meaning of the evangelical phrase, 'the kingdom of God,' or 'the kingdom of heaven.' It plainly comprises, in addition to the spiritual kingdom of Christ on earth, *the kingdom of Christ in heaven.* It extends backward from the days of the advent to those of man's earliest life, gathering into its bosom all the subjects of Redemption scat-

tered o'er this vast tract of time, and irradiating them all with the glory of 'the first-born,' or 'sons of God.' This kingdom was Christ's from the beginning, and over it he presided in his *pre-existent state* as the predestined Redeemer of men. He may be said to have brought it down from heaven, and to have impersonated it in himself on the earth. He drew it down from those inaccessible heights to man's habitation below, when he became 'flesh and dwelt among us,'—opening it to the vision of men, first by the Gospel, and finally, when re-ascended to his throne, by the ministration of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of his disciples. Thus the two worlds were brought into unison by the Redeemer-God—his person—sacrifice—and mediation. Heaven was no longer heaven—earth no longer earth: they embraced each other, gathered 'into one;' just as in the vision of the holy mount, representatives of the grand hosts of the departed showed themselves in fellowship with the transfigured Jesus.

Hence, what was heretofore obtainable only in the *celestial realms of this kingdom*, dropped down as a roll of blessing into the bosoms of the faithful, creating joy and gladness the same in kind as in 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' Heretofore, the names 'written in heaven' could be read only there: now they are rendered by the Holy Ghost himself in believing hearts, in language gloriously responsive—'Abba, Father.' Heretofore, destiny was simultaneous with *departure:* now it is enthroned in the conscience of the living man. Heretofore, the 'cherubim of glory' only uttered their rapture from the neighbourhood of the Throne: now they

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rise upward from the heart of the living temple, the Church, intermingling with those strains, loftier yet still the same.

Hence, what St Paul says of 'patterns of things in the heavens,' may very properly be referred to diagrams of the world on high *replenished by the Redeemed;* and the administration which hereafter was to be no more than *pictured* in the tabernacle or temple of the Jews: in its fulness it was to be drawn out in the Church of the New Testament—in 'the length, and breadth, and depth, and height' of that love which 'passes knowledge,' and in that fulness of God which stands with its mighty prefix ALL as the ultimately possible of man's redeemed heritage.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELATIONS OF THE FILIAL NATURE TO MEDIATION.

The relation of the *filial life* to Mediation is here to be noticed. This relation, it may be shown, is a primary one; and that in whatsoever degree Mediation extends itself to other objects, these are but collateral and subordinate. The person of the Mediator, as well as the Person who appointed him to this office, and in whom it will finally surcease, are clear indications of the commanding greatness of the result here announced, namely, the production and destiny of the *filial nature*. In support of this view, it is not necessary to reproduce scriptures already quoted. There is one, however, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 14) which looks so fully on this point, that it may be here fitly introduced: 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.' Here the *nature* of 'the children' is evidently put forth as the ground of the assumption of humanity by the Son of God; and its force lies in the *filial nature* of those by this interposition to be redeemed. They were 'children,' not merely in foresight of their actual redemption, but on the ground of their possession of *humanity*. They are described by *race-characteristics*

Christ's assumption of humanity,

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But if 'the children' are understood of the body of the Redeemed, still, the significance of the passage is much the same, since what they were to become by virtue of this interposition is inseparable from the condition of humanity, or the partaking of 'flesh and blood.' The subjects of the Deliverer's grace are 'the children;' he descends to no rank of being below that of 'the children;' and he conforms both to their nature and condition, simply with the view of working out their ultimate blessedness *as* '*children.*'

for the children. Thus, Redemption is exclusively a *filial work;* and to it in this peculiar aspect has the Lord engaged himself, through the entire term of his mediation, past, and to come: his sympathies as well as his merits—his economies of Providence, and of the Church—his gifts official or personal—his Spirit's reign within the soul, producing holiness and joy, energy, patience—the lowliness of his own image, or the likeness of his Father,—all bespeak the mastery of the *filial idea.* This is 'the glory,' which though hidden, must finally 'be revealed.' 'The whole creation' awaits it, as if the whole interval

of its hiddenness were but the period of a mighty gestation and travail, to issue in this eternal release of redeemed man from every shackle, and every habiliment incongruous to 'the liberty of the sons of God.' His own last words from the judgment-seat are as replete with the tenderness of fraternal recognition, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father,' as were those of his well-known voice on the shore of the sea of Galilee, 'Children, have ye any meat?'

Thus, Mediation is scripturally declared to be founded, maintained, and consummated for 'the children;' and the joy of our Lord's finished reign on the great day of the presentation of 'the children' to their Father in heaven, is expressed in prophetic language, 'Behold I, and the children God hath given me.'[1] He even accounts their glorious hymn of praise, rising through himself to the great Father, to be less theirs than his own: 'In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee;'[2] as if this praise were but the return of the great oracle of the NAME spoken by himself to them, 'I will declare THY NAME unto my brethren.'

Mediation not *necessary* to the filial nature.

It is not, however, from this to be inferred that Mediation was absolutely necessary to the existence and glory of the filial nature; for this would be to assume the necessity of moral evil in the universe, and to make misery indispensable to the production of happiness. Mediation, indeed, supposes the *existence* of evil, and the plan for counter-working that evil; so as in fact, not merely to neutralize it, but to work out of it a more exalted form of good. In this point of view at least, whatever difficulties may

[1] Isa. viii. 18. [2] Ps. xxii. 22.

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attend the questions of the origin and final existence of evil in the universe, nothing appears inconsistent with the most exalted conceptions of the divine *goodness*, much less of the divine holiness, because the production of the greatest amount of happiness in the Creation may be the result of *Mediation alone*, and, that with a view to this goal of all finite existence, Mediation may have been ordained. If we, on the contrary, suppose a universe of beings without moral faultiness in any individual, not as a possibility, but as a fact consonant with the best ideas we can form of Deity; it would still remain to be proved that *on the whole* the balance of happiness would be in favour of such an universe, rather than of such an one as really exists.

Contingency essential to universe perfection.

Waiving the difficulties even in conceiving of an universe in which volition should be in all cases *overruled*, or in which no *alternative* to the supremacy of God's will should be possible, it would contrast, we imagine, unfavourably as to its characteristics of moral excellency, and its measure of happiness, with one in which this uniformity was broken, and the scale of creature power to *ascend* was just in proportion to his power to *descend*. We ourselves can see a mighty difference between the innocence and ductility of childhood and the lofty self-control of accomplished manhood; or, between the simplicity, almost amounting to foolishness, which belongs to seclusion and inexperience, as contrasted with the rich wisdom and palmy vigour of a well-trained mind. On all hands we see that not mind, or the scale of endowment merely, rules the character and destiny of the man, but the nature of his mental and moral exercises, the posi-

tions in which he has been placed, and the principles which have governed him throughout life. To suppose that beings may exist of high excellency, and in the possession of eternal elements of self-resource, without having passed through a moral curriculum of some kind—a course of moral gymnastics adapted to their powers—is to refuse all the lessons of experience, and to suppose the possibility of an order of things so remote from that of our own world, as to be pronounced entirely chimerical.

The grandeur of man's nature.

But granting its possibility, what then? Would the joint stock of happiness possessed by millions of such beings amount to the treasure of one redeemed soul? In the system of nature we not only observe a scale of existences in which the different classes admit of comparison with each other, but of those which admit of none: for instance, matter and spirit; or even the unorganized mass of the world, and the forms of life which teem upon it. Again, we cannot compare the total of merely sensational life with that of a single individual in whom the spiritual and rational powers are superadded to the sensational. True, the sensational is represented in that individual, and it is brought into mysterious conjunction with the spiritual; but there is in reality no community of *essence*. There exists no term of comparison between them. The individual man is greater than the whole animal kingdom which surrounds him, and which he touches in his lower nature.

Again, we find within the compass of the human race, strange varieties: some so distant from each other, that their common humanity seems as much

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a matter of faith as of reason. The style of man is also different in different ages and different circumstances. He is the creature of influences, and not of constitution only. And again, a specimen occurs here and there, of unwonted grandeur,—a colossal being lifted almost to the heavens, and gazed upon wonderingly, as well by posterity as by contemporary millions. Here is still man, but in such unwonted proportions, that he seems to have assimilated for his production the human elements of an age, and to have given to the mass of the race an almost totally new conception of the stupendous powers of their own nature. There seems in that one man to be concentrated more than the humanity of thousands, to whom its excellency is as inaccessible as would be their translation into gods.

Its development under mediation.

In like manner, may we not suppose *the filial manhood* to rear itself immeasurably high, as 'the branch of the Lord, beautiful and glorious'? To its original constitution of vast capacity, there have been such accessions made during the sweep of its wondrous history, as, saving its identity, might fitly entitle it to be called 'a new creature.' Its condition presents to us all the interest of the most marvellous contrasts. Its fortunes have been all reversed, and its virtues, though certainly not created out of its vices, have been brightened by the friction of their antagonism, and perfected in the sharpest school of adversity. Ingrafted into a stock of immeasurably greater excellency than its native one, and developed by all the chosen agencies of Omnipotent Love, everything in its condition has been made to tell upon its reserved fortunes. Joys and sorrows have been alike distributed to this one

intent, and the list of its passive graces has been made out with as much exactness as those of its serving power; while its births into ultimate greatness have been *successive*, as those of the production of the flower—the natural leading to the spiritual, death to immortality, and the grave to the resurrection.

As *two* natures meet in such a creature, the material and the spiritual, so *two* worlds are necessary to its production and maturity, one of which must deliver up the whole of its results as tributary to the purposes of the other. Should it then be deemed an extravagant supposition, that such a creature must surpass every other in its capacity for happiness, and that the assemblage of these, comprising THE CHURCH, should, to use the words of Christ, 'enter into the joy of the Lord'?—that ocean-blessedness which was 'the joy set before him' when he 'endured the cross,' not to be shared by any but the members of 'his body,' 'the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.'

Its communion with the divine nature.

The blessedness to be enjoyed by the redeemed, resulting from their filial nature and its inheritance, LOVE, is in kind and degree so divine and full, as to distance, beyond all comparison, every other kind of blessedness. It flows from communion with the DIVINE NATURE: not even from mere conformity with the divine attributes, or the course of the divine government; not from the mere introspection of one's moral self, or the rewarding favour of the great Sovereign for ever reflected in the moral consciousness; nor from honourable enrolment in the ranks of his great empire, or even a position so absolutely secure from lapse as that the full heri-

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tage of eternity in peace and gladness may be drawn into each successive instant of existence. For all these kinds of blessedness the Deity has indeed made boundless provision; yet are they all marked off from this, drawn immediately from the very fountain of *the divine nature*, to the development of whose unity in the soul a mysterious fellowship of the Persons, 'Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost,' is vouchsafed.

God's justice developed by the presence of evil.

But can anything be said respecting the *counterside* of this doctrine of happiness, since Mediation itself supposes there is one, and fact as well as Scripture assures us of the wide-spread existence of moral evil, and its concomitant, misery? If we advert to God as the author of Creation, we shall be convinced, that while it has been intended to reflect his character generally, it has especially been intended to reflect his goodness, or, as we have said evangelically, to reflect Him as LOVE. Hence, to diffuse happiness has been his great design in the formation of his creatures, in kind and measure agreeable to his sovereignty; while the distribution of it must needs accord with his whole character, and not a *part only*. Had the universe in no section of it, ever lapsed, we should infer the universal reign of *Love: Justice* would have been an undeveloped attribute. But, as the existence of moral evil has called into exercise this great guardian principle of Government, and thus introduced *two* principles instead of one into the divine administration, a question here propounds itself: what the relation of these principles is to each other?—whether they may be assumed to turn contrariwise; or, like the Cherubim, to look into each

other's face? For instance, does as much of the divine empire as falls under the rule of Justice represent an abstraction of an equal amount from the domains of Goodness?—or does it happen that so much of the sway of happiness as has been lost in one part is transferred to another?

Justice and Love in the administration of the universe.

We observe in the economy of the world, as well in the human as in the physical departments, the prevalence of what we may call the compensating principle. What is drawn off in one direction reveals itself in another. The sea that leaves certain shores bare, and adds a new strip of territory to an isle or a continent, exacts payment in the form of an aggression on some other shore. Seasons have their alternations much on the same principle. While one city or empire flourishes, another declines. Commerce shifts itself from one point of the compass to another; and even that most artificial of human mediums of intercourse, money, taking wings from one country, assuredly drops again in others. Considering the universe as *one* in a moral sense (as seems demonstrated by the great scheme of Mediation), is it not reasonable to suppose that some laws analogous to these prevail throughout it? Justice there must be, as the divine nature in overt exercise, and for the maintenance of eternal right. Love also there must be, and,—as the paramount principle of Creation,—in the ascendant.

Thus, we see it is not impossible for the two principles to work harmoniously for the production of the greatest universe-happiness. True, it is impossible that they should, in the natural order of things, combine in *the same fields of existence*—the

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one would annihilate the other: but it is quite conceivable that there may be ample room within the universe for the scope of both; and that the relations of the one to the other may be by the Deity so watched over in the vast complexities of his administration, that the grand issue of that administration—the manifestation of himself as LOVE—may be most triumphantly secured.

Love the primary principle.

We have said, that in the *order* of manifestation in the history of the creatures, Justice is but *secondary* to Goodness or Love: from this it may be safely inferred, that the secondary principle can never be made to change place with the *first;* but that the first must also be the *last*, by whatsoever methods this goal of things may be reached. The idea of an universe in the main, much less exclusively, presided over by mere Justice, as the possible alternative of default in the creatures, is little consonant with its origin as Love, since assuredly, the reign of Evil, perpetuated with its concomitant misery, would seem to frustrate the very purpose of its existence. All, therefore, that can be safely affirmed of the operation of Justice within an empire of Love, is this—that as by its nature Justice seems to be the counterpart of Love (for Justice cannot be conceived of apart from it), is that it shall fulfil entirely its office as a *secondary* one, under the auspices of Infinite Wisdom; but that it never can fail to exalt the glory of Love by adding to, not detracting from, the happiness of the universe.

It has been said that Mediation was doubtless, intended to be the great master-measure for maintaining the relation between these principles, not only in our world, but in the universe; and conse-

quently the *balance* between their respective results, as seen by the Omniscient. Accordingly, we trace the exhibition of both, not only in the personal history of the Mediator himself, but in the doctrines of Revelation as they were applied to our race, both before and since his coming. Justice has never been an *ascendant* principle in the divine government over the world; it has always been in subordination to Love. The characteristics of general Providence are all of this stamp when rightly interpreted; nor is there any satisfactory reason apparent for the continuance of such a race as ours, if we look away from the guidance of this principle, interpreted by Peter as 'long-suffering,' and 'salvation.'

All its purposes not yet fulfilled.

But the *measure* of God's purposes of love to man in the creation of this fund of happiness for his race, is not full as yet. More time, and more experiments, more peoples and more agencies, are summoned to expend themselves on the designs of Infinite Love. God bears with evil chiefly for the sake of the good he brings out of it. He does not watch over the world for evil, but to give it an 'expected end;' even as Christ, amidst the anguish of his final hour, was calm and benevolent enough to look beyond the scene of his sufferings on the multitude of 'his seed;' and there, and then, to be 'satisfied' with 'the travail of his soul.'

It is Love which, failing in one direction, turns itself in another, and never desists from its kindly offices, whatever be their reception among men, until it has accomplished all that it set itself to, from the beginning. Love utterly eschews failure, constantly demands room for the scope of its sym-

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pathies and the action of its appliances; nor will it rest until it has fully vindicated its glory, and marshalled in its train of triumph every power and event of the universe. Our Lord's parable of the recusant guests is in point here: they were indifferent to the feast; their seats were empty; but the feast was not therefore a superfluity. 'The poor, the blind, the maimed,' were forthwith summoned from the streets and lanes of the city, to take their places; and when these were insufficient to consume the repast, the highways and hedges are made to furnish the complement of guests. Imperial bounty refuses to be balked of its intents by the churlishness or stubbornness of those made insolent by favour: it takes another and a wider range, until the palace is filled, and the festal hour is made august by the presence of a multitude.

Neglect of the Gospel its own punishment.

This parable is an image of the entire economy of God toward the world, though it primarily sets forth the mere passing crisis of the rejection of the Jew and the call of the Gentile. The spirit of it is in accordance with the principles blended in the economy of Mediation; embracing, it is true, *directly*, our own world, but *indirectly*, *all others*. The kingdom lost to the Jew, in consequence found by the Gentile, shows us the deflected stream of Goodness barred in one direction, finding vent in another. Not lost, or even diminished in its course through the desert, it glides onward into fresh territories, and cheers the habitations of tribes and peoples far beyond those nearer to its source. Its commission uncancelled, and its resources infinite, this Goodness replies to the ungrateful and the stubborn only by its still determinate onflowing, making *neglect its*

own punishment, as if surcharged by its undrawn supplies, to answer to the world's thirst, and the Gospel's mission, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!'

Justice augments the sum of happiness.

The parable of the talents is also rich in suggestion on the same topic: 'Take from him therefore the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For, to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance;' 'but cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness' (Matt. xxv. 28-30). Thus, though Justice itself does no more than inflict punishment on the delinquent by the withdrawal of his talent, the talent is not left unappropriated; it is handed over as a *surplus gift* to the approved servant,—that is, the award of justice, so to speak, is passed on and posted to his account by the munificence of Love. The augmentation of happiness is in the direction which befits it; teaching us the sublime lesson, that Justice, while it inflicts misery, has also the power of *augmenting happiness;* and that the *last result* of its administration is not the *quantum of universe-suffering* which it perpetuates, but the *additions* which it has made to universe-happiness. The *indirect* effects of Justice, at least, are *beneficent;* and the elements of universe-happiness are, in consequence, more full than otherwise they could have been. Even the contrast between the fortunes of the lost and the saved, the eternal presence of the judgment-scene, and the knowledge that the results of that judgment-scene must subsist in undying fulness, cannot but produce a profound effect.

Even substances of themselves pernicious are combined in Nature, and balanced with such won-

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drous art as to serve beneficent purposes. But these, when unduly concentrated, either by accidental derangements or by human art, elaborate poisons, or explode, and diffuse destruction. What is the crust of our globe, but the exterior portion of the great molten sea still hidden in its bosom, formed by a cooling process, and the mere scoriæ left by the retreating fires of remote ages? Yet is it the marvellous basis of our human habitation; not only stable as its foundation, but more, the source of all its scenic beauties—of the waving corn-field, the lovely flower, and the luxuriant mead. Even paradise, garnished by the hand of God with all the wonders of the landscape, and enriched with every element of beauty and fruitfulness, was reared on no other foundation than this, to which the glories of the firmament were but the counterpart, and the offices of the sun bathing all in lustre and geniality, stood in indissoluble relations of reciprocity. Paradise was then what the world is now—a midway thing, like the hanging gardens of Babylon—the firmament above, and the abyss of fire beneath.

Penal predestination untenable.

From this view of the relations between Justice and Love, it seems obvious that no doctrine of predestination is tenable which implies that creatures were brought into existence with a view to exhibit the former attribute in *its punitive form.* This notion is absolutely at war with the fountain-principle of Creation; and whenever held in this unconditional sense, must cast upon it a shade, which no subtleties of the metaphysician or of the theologian can dispel. In the nature of things, predestination must rest on the *contingency that de-*

velops Justice itself, which, as we have seen, can be none other than the moral default of the creature deflecting itself from the eternal rectitude inherent in Love as the fountain of existence, and, *as such*, the fountain of LAW, agreeably to our Lord's words, 'on these two commandments'—the grand ordinances of Love—'hang all the law and the prophets.'

The Church the reflection of the divine nature.

As Mediation is intended to perfect the demonstration of the universe-harmony of Justice and Love, so is the *filial nature* intended to be the eternal light of this harmony. The Church is the fabric which these great principles have built up to such a height, and filled with such a resplendency, that it may be said to reflect their glory as the last and fullest manifestation of the divine nature. Every individual of this countless multitude called the Church, is a perfect reflection of the divine nature as it has been unfolded in the universe of the past, and as it will exist in the universe of the future. These are 'as the stars,' and 'the brightness of the firmament,' which 'shine for ever and ever;' and the crown which adorns every member of it is but the radiance of His, who has led up these principles in his own history to the utmost height of their supremacy. To each and all of them, 'the crown of life' is *as* the crown of LOVE, the 'crown of RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

CHAPTER III.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH.

THIS view of the *filial nature* presents the great fundamental doctrines of the New Testament as ULTIMATE TRUTHS. Since these are truths of Revelation only, it is forbidden us to speak of them in the language of metaphysicians, as *necessary* truths: their characteristics of finality, whatever these may be, are entirely derived to us from the authority of Revelation, and our perception of the harmony of that Revelation with itself. They have no position *exterior* to it, at least from our point of vision. But what are the truths we here denominate ultimate? And how are they made out to be such by the aspects of the filial nature?

Ultimate truths.

There are *three* truths that seem to answer to this description.

The first is found in the revealed relations of the Godhead to itself; or, in other words, in the doctrine of the Trinity:

The second, in the human nature of Christ:

And the third, in the relations of the filial nature to both.

The Triune distinction essential.

(1.) As to the first, when we rank the revelation of the divine nature in the New Testament form of it, as ultimate, we suppose the revelation itself to be a pure *reality*, and not some specific *manner* of

representing the Godhead *to us*, which may turn out to be but hypothetic and temporary, in accordance with a finished purpose. This latter view, which has assumed various shapes in theological controversy, from Sabellianism down to Unitarianism, is at once set aside as at irreconcilable variance with the whole doctrinal scheme of the New Testament; and as truly, though not as distinctively, with that of the Old also; and, moreover, with the entire tone of truthfulness and simplicity pervading both. It is as inconsistent for us to assume an unreal and merely *modal* discovery of the relations of the Godhead with itself, as it is for us to assume an unreal and modal representation of its attributes. On the contrary, we are bound to maintain that in both instances, the representations are equally *real*, though equally beyond our comprehension.

Its design the production and destiny of the filial nature.

Assuming, then, that this position is valid, for what purpose is the revelation given? That it looks ultimately to the production and destiny of the *filial nature*, is demonstrable from the whole series of remarks already made. The Incarnation, the Atonement, and the work of the Spirit, all point in this one direction. In fact, the whole system of Evangelism centres in this. It seems that the filial nature was created on purpose to develop this mystery of God, and that this is the great final cause of the revelation itself. The revelation of the Godhead is not *accommodated* to the purpose of 'the adoption;' but contrariwise, 'the adoption' is originated to unfold this mystery. The whole scheme of Mediation converges to this point. The relation of sonship *presupposes it*, answering to the designations of the Holy Trinity; and it is certain

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that the *distinctively personal and essential* manifestations of the Godhead to human nature are *limited to the privilege of the 'adoption.'* The revealed relations of the Godhead are not doctrinal mysteries of a speculative order—conceivably, therefore, severable from the heart of Christianity, or predicable of other systems besides this. On the contrary, these relations import *offices* on man's behalf, and imply the deepest truths of evangelical experience. In fact, they constitute *the only direct knowledge of God obtainable by man.* They are brought out of the abyss of their infinity into our manhood, and transfer themselves into the depths of human consciousness.

What is thus matter-of-fact on the testimony of Revelation itself (which, in this view, is but the chart of man's inheritance in Christ), makes it sure that these relations of the Godhead realized by the filial nature throughout its earthly history, are *essential*, and *to be unfolded throughout an eternal future.* The filial nature is a human ingraft into these relations, destined to live and flourish in them, as in its own world of the Infinite. We cannot conceive of the relation thus formed with the INFINITE as a shiftable thing, or subject to decadence: it is that of a being formed to reflect Deity *as He is;* and as much requires his eternal presence and glory, as the earth requires the heavens, or the eye the light.

Christ's humanity eternal.

(2.) As to the human nature of Christ, there is equal evidence, from the testimony of Scripture respecting his person, work, and glory, to show that his relation to the Godhead on one hand, and to man on the other, is of necessity *eternal.* But for Christ's

humanity, the mystery of the Godhead could never have been spiritually unfolded. His PERSON is the grand primary manifestation of this mystery in a being standing partly in and partly out of creature-relations; thus projecting it in a form and into a sphere entirely new, and within which the stupendous purposes of the manifestation were to be accomplished in the formation of the Church.

The *eternity* of the humanity of Christ is as much an *official* as it is a personal necessity. In the latter point of view, taken apart from its relation to the Church, his humanity is immeasurably the *first creature-nature*, and the flower of the universe. But taken in its relative and official aspects, it is bound up with the very existence of the Church for ever. When Mediation itself shall have been closed, the *results* of Mediation cannot but be everlasting; and the *person* of the Mediator is just as necessary to the eternity of these results as it was to their previous attainment. These results cannot be conceived of *apart* from the eternity of his relations to the Godhead and to man. He is not the Christ of the *past only*, he is also the Christ of *eternity*. They would all break off and be lost in the sweep of an infinite duration, but for their eternal unity in HIMSELF, and their eternal reflection through the Church, on the universe. For what is this *filiation* but the effect of a cause never ceasing to operate, namely, the Incarnation? Filiation is the mystery eternally unfolding in the nature of the Redeemed, binding them into indescribable oneness with itself, and forming 'the way everlasting' into the heights of the INFINITE. 'Because I live,' said Christ, 'ye

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shall live also.'[1] 'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life;' and why? 'He dwelleth in me, and I in him.'[2]

Thus the filial life, as an emanation from Christ, identifies him with the whole current of its existence—with its consciousness, its powers, its pleasures, its eternity.

The eternity of Christ's headship necessary to the Church.

It is a low and insufficient view of the person and office of Christ which dwells upon them in their *preliminary* manifestations only or chiefly, without that continuity of view which makes them as necessary to man *after* his redemption is consummated, as for the accomplishment of the work of redemption itself. The relations of Christ to God, and of man to Christ, are as absolutely fixed by the great preliminary manifestations to which we refer, as are the relations of God to man by his existence as a creature. The REDEEMER grasps the whole eternity of the subjects of his redemption, and fills that eternity with HIMSELF as the glorious fruit of all the earlier antecedents of his human existence and their own. It is not his finished work merely to land them in heaven, but for himself to 'lead them to living fountains of water'—to shepherd his flock in those high places, not to leave them to seek in those unbounded plains of safety and joy their delights for themselves. *His glory* must ever be the object nearer to the view of the Church than that of the Father, and absolutely conditional to that wonderful vision. If an 'exceeding weight of glory' rests upon the Church, and forms its crown, there is still room in the glorified sympathies of manhood for the felt attractions of *brotherhood*, and

[1] John xiv. 19. [2] John vi. 56.

the delightful lure of that bond which knits together the Redeemer and the Redeemed for ever.

The filial nature consciously eternal.

(3.) The filial nature possesses its *own intuitional evidence of finality.* The very first pulse of its existence is sufficient to awaken the soul from the death-slumbers of a long past, and to strike into it the consciousness of immortality. Thus, 'the adoption' from the beginning, declares itself to be a principle of *divine life* imparted to man, which, while it relieves the gloom of mortality surrounding it, opens a new capacity in man for the last fruitions of existence in the divine nature. This life at once transposes the being of man—lifts it into a higher category than before—and not only introduces it to the felt surroundings of eternity, but to the 'fellowship' of God himself. Thus the constitutional bias, the law of appetency and thought, the stirrings of divinity, and the aspirations after the INFINITE, are felt to rule the filial destiny; and 'hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us' (Rom. v. 5). The range of this 'new creature' transcends all the regions of the finite: it has found a FATHER, not of the flesh, but of the spirit, and in the embrace of that Father it has found a HOME.

This divine *sensationalism* (if we may so term it) is a form of intuition simple as the instincts of our own or of inferior natures, and equally direct and infallible. It is a light which opens to man his eternal all of good—his final goal—the 'light of life,' as our Lord expresses it—a radiance issuing from the filial life itself flung over time and worlds immeasurably, and revealing the bosom of the

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ETERNAL, as the last sanctuary of redeemed existence.

No advance upon it possible.

The evidence of this life and its powers, akin to that of our natural life and faculties, is simply *infolded in existence itself, and is felt to be an ultimate truth*, since no conception can be formed of an advance upon it as predicable of the creature, and as little of its reduction into anything lower. The expressions 'eternal redemption,' 'eternal salvation,' and 'eternal life,' so frequently found in Scripture, disclose only their emphasis to the regenerated life of man. *Here* they sound as oracles which find an echo in fact. *Here* there is no more idea of this life failing than of God's faithfulness and love coming to an end—the 'river of life' dried up from its source, or the 'tree of life' ceasing to bear its fruit. The filial life cannot determine its condition of beatitude by cycles, which, however measureless to us, fall short of eternity equally with our 'threescore years and ten.' It is the creature of a paternity with whom 'a thousand ages are but as yesterday,' and the image of *a filiation* which existed 'ere the world was.' Its very charter of life as *eternal, is filial.* Its moral qualities of stability and perfection, the rewards of service in a condition of probation, and its after associations with all that is dignified and glorious in the universe, *do not of themselves* secure this. The 'eternal life' is the prerogative of the filial life: it is *indigenous* in it, not as the result of its powers or its fortunes merely, but of its *in-being in Christ, and its fellowship with the Triune Deity.* Hence, John calls Christ himself 'that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us,' *i.e.*, manifested in the gift

of *the filial nature*, and maintained by a fellowship with 'the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;' so that in the possession of such a boon as this, our 'joy may be full' (1 John i. 2).

To this glance at the ultimate truths of Christianity, we may append the notice of two or three others, which, though of the greatest importance, do *not* appear in this light.

Punishment a doctrine recorded, not a truth of experience.

1. We may instance the doctrine of eternal punishment. It is not for a moment to be imagined that by this it is intended to cast doubt upon the truth of this doctrine, or to insinuate that the scriptural evidences for it are insufficient. It does not, however, fall in our way either to state these evidences, or to reason upon them; but simply to declare that this evidence is irrefragable, if our judgment is to be ruled on this awful subject by Revelation alone. Our meaning is, that none of the awards of justice possess the *same evidences* of ultimate truth as those of Grace and Redemption: and for this reason, that they cannot be brought within the sphere of *our personal experience*, and are thus by their very nature excluded from our direct cognizance. Punitive doctrines are *matters of record only:* they are reflected by Providence, or they are more or less vividly impressed on our moral consciousness; but they are not things incessantly appealing to our *soul-life*, nor wrought into it by the open fellowship of the filial nature with the TRIUNE. Here Love, not Justice, rules, and moulds everything to its sway.

Testimony appropriate to the outer truths, intuition to the inner.

The doctrines previously mentioned as ultimate are the 'light of life,' in our Lord's own sense: they belong to the 'holy of holies,' where 'the glory' is resident. Beyond the range of these, there is

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the *veil* which shades off ulterior portions of the great temple of truth: at least, the lights of that temple are intromitted from various points, with more or less of distinctness, but in marked contrast with the privileged realm of 'the glory.' Faith, for instance, is appropriate to Christianity historically considered—to its doctrines taken as a whole, or to the apprehension of any one of them in particular. But this principle is very distinct from, and inferior to, the power of that first afflatus which wafted them into the hearts of the apostles, or that afflatus of the same Spirit which, in all ages, wafts the same doctrines into the heart of the believer, sealing him 'to the day of redemption.' The first is the general and much fainter approach of the Gospel to the mind; the second is personal and demonstrative—it is *knowledge* from within, or rather from *above*—not persuasion or conviction, in the purely human sense, which implies no *revelation*, but the mind satisfied by evidence furnished from *without*.

Hence, doctrines, though sustained by all the authority of the Record, and therefore unfalteringly accepted by the disciple, have not the *life-light* cast upon them peculiar to the SONSHIP. These last are made our own in a sense not applicable to the rest: we know them as 'things *given* to us of God,' not generally revealed only. Their relations to these may be partially hidden, and not meant to be unfolded in the present state; so that the great penal doctrine of the New Testament can never be put before us as *the antithesis of 'the gift of Grace,' entitling us to infer the eternity of one from the eternity of the other*. Intuitional light fills only the realm of

Love—the light of testimony alone, the realm of Justice.

The resurrection rests on testimony.

2. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body may be selected as another instance, in which the light of testimony alone rules our minds, and which derives no aid whatever from the great intuitional principles of the filial life. From first to last, the resurrection rests on testimony, the grand example of it being the resurrection of Christ himself. Had it been otherwise, we should be at a loss to discover why a heresy on the doctrine of the resurrection should have arisen in any of the apostolic churches (which, according to St Paul, was the fact), as we cannot suppose it possible that in those churches there were found persons denying the resurrection of Christ. Indeed, St Paul settles this point; for his argument against those who disbelieved in the resurrection of the body, turns entirely on the assumption that *all agreed* in the belief of the resurrection of Christ. This can be explained only on the supposition that the historical fact as to Christ, and the creation of the spiritual life in man, were not held *as of themselves* sufficient to demonstrate the article of a general resurrection. And it is not a little remarkable, that the soul-life which we have denominated the filial, appears to have been so dominant in the minds of those who demurred to the doctrine of the resurrection, that they held it to be alone answerable to all the purposes of Christianity, and to all the aspirations of human nature. According to them, the resurrection was 'past already.' No doubt, indeed, the heresy had its embryo in the current philosophy of those days respecting matter (if not from the figu-

Heresy of the early times.

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rative language of the prophets [1]), and was probably one of the earliest rudiments of that Gnosticism which in those times so widely infested the christian church.

St Paul's reasoning on it.

It is not, however, with the causes of the heresy that we have to do, but with the heresy itself, as illustrating the position before laid down, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body *is purely that of testimony*, and is not to be ranked among the great intuitional teachings before specified, notwithstanding it almost touches them, and is the great complement of the filial life—'the adoption' being called by St Paul, 'the redemption of our body' (Rom. viii. 23). The difference in this respect is clearly resolvable into the difference of substance between body and soul in human nature, and the fact that redemptional operations are for the present, strictly confined to the latter. 'If Christ be in you,' says St Paul, 'the body is dead because of sin'—*i.e.*, original sin—'but the spirit is life because of righteousness' (Rom. viii. 10). This is the explanation. Nothing short of a change in the constitution of the body, and a corresponding consciousness to it in the soul, by the same Power that quickens it out of its trespasses and sins, could directly assure us of the resurrection of the body. But this would be to *forestall* it, and thus to displace it from its true position in the economy of redemption. On this supposition, no resurrection would be possible, a change equivalent to it having taken place already. But the great soul-life recognised by the apostle in the passage, 'because of righteousness,' is an accomplished fact, and

[1] Isa. xxvi. 14; Ezek. xxxvii. 1.

it is the *consciousness* of this which bears the soul onward as by the weight of its current, to the consummation of its glorified state.

Of any bodily change *as prospective*, consciousness is impossible. The reconstitution of the body by the resurrection is so remote from any conditions of experience derived from its present relation to the soul, that even speculation is at fault concerning it. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' But this is not applicable to the existing powers of the filial life which are inseparable from our consciousness, and are in direct correspondence with their last sphere—THE INFINITE. As to these, therefore, the revelation of their futurity chiefly refers to the *degree*, not to the nature, of our blessedness. As it respects the latter, the future, however extended, can evolve nothing *new*. The destiny of the filial life is identified with that life itself, which, as being the gift of the 'divine nature,' simply and for ever, finds its all in God.

It is this truth which sheds so much light on the otherwise unapproachable mystery of the separate state, while the condition of the body remains just what it was. The last light of heaven, though it plays upon the tomb, awakens not its inmates from their slumber, nor disturbs that deep silence which 'the last trump' only can end. On the contrary, the light of the filial life rends the intervening veil of mortality and materialism; and the reality and glory of 'the world to come' are presented to it as the very sphere of its *existent powers*, and far more in accordance with them than the outward and embodied life, which has in it so much of penalty, and so many ineffaceable tokens of the Fall.

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It is in this particular that the advantage of christian believers over the saints of pre-advent times, most strikingly appears. The entire of the Old Testament, when all its light of immortality is concentrated, and the confessions of all its worthies in prospect of death, put together, dwindles in comparison with such a saying as this: 'Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord' (2 Cor. v. 8).

Relations of materialism to the glorified Church.

3. The last example to be adduced in favour of the distinction between truths stamped with finality by the power of the filial life, and those which lack this evidence, relates to materialism and its aspects toward the glorified Church. Here, if possible, we are still farther at sea than before, being altogether without the advantages of experience, or even the guidance of analogy. We have but a very slender perception of the relations and uses of a material system to the human nature in its final condition. What these are to Christ himself in his glorified state, is an impenetrable secret to us; or what (if any there be), to the Church during the separate state.

Unquestionably, the great link of evidence in favour of future relations with the material system is furnished by the resurrection; since the glorified body, however ethereal in substance (warranting St Paul's appellation 'spiritual'), is still matter taken up into the last and highest condition of our psychical nature. This certainly indicates the fellowship of our nature, when glorified, with some system of materialism correspondent with itself, in total op-

position to the ancient tenet of pagan philosophy, —the incompatibility of matter with the perfect development of mind. Indeed, any notion contrary to that of perfection as resident in this combination of natures rather than in one only, leaves the resurrection utterly unaccounted for, because it is an advance to a *final* condition, not to one intermediate, and subservient to another. The resurrection supposes man's nature to be *completed* by the re-assumption of its lost material elements, and shows us that our first life, however in certain great respects transmuted, is not dropped on the way to its final goal; while it is highly probable that the resumption of the bodily nature is just as necessary to the ultimate perfection of the filial life, as was its creation with this constituent, to the production of God's ideal of humanity. It also seems clear that the resurrection cannot be more than a *means to an end*, and that it bespeaks for itself a *material system* formed in accordance with it; as such, furnished with properties, influences, and objects, immeasurably in advance of anything we know, or can imagine.

Matter adequate to these purposes.

Here we leave this question. All that we are assured of is that matter and its properties as revealed to research, appear to be perfectly adequate to the fulfilment of these last conditions of redeemed life. It has been shown that worlds are inlaid within the sphere of ordinary phenomena; that the sensible is but a system of symbols; and that, under the garb of outward things, Nature veils her life-springs, the centre and soul of all her laws and agencies. Investigation has laid open the wonderful complications resident in all this external

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unity of system, and the astonishing balance of contingent forces necessary to uphold what seems to us *self-sustaining*. Research has shown us in a leaf, or a flower, such a world of art as man cannot bottom, much less rival; that all knowledge consists in observing, arranging, and explaining *facts*, of which Nature contains an infinite store, and impresses the conviction that discovery has no limits, and that the throne of Science will never plant itself within the arcana of the world.

Aspects of Science toward this teaching.

If Science has taught us anything of value beyond the interest of an hour, it has taught us that it can give no account of anything but that it *is*, not that it *must be*—that the true cause of all that is lies beyond itself; and that the *future* is not included (much less the *eternal*) in the existence of anything. Science, rightly applied, is a protest against Atheism. It at least intimates that Religion is planted in the deepest foundations of things accessible to the philosopher. Nor is Revelation, which foretells the doom of the world by conflagration, confronted, but confirmed, when Science resolves the crust of the earth into the result of processes and epochs of combustion; or the still retained heat of its surface, to the deep fires still raging in its bosom. The penalties of the 'eternal fire' destined for the 'ungodly,' as well as the lurid scenes of the judgment-day, are made by these discoveries to slumber at our very feet, awaiting but the 'word' which shall give them mastery over the Creation.

It would seem that modern times have produced a speaking commentary, though unconsciously, on St Peter's words: 'The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, re-

served unto fire, unto the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men' (2 Pet. iii. 7). Here the assumed literality of the sacred text seems abundantly corroborated by the oracle of Nature as interpreted by philosophy. The penal fires never to be quenched, do, in fact, lurk in every corner of man's habitation; and by a natural construction of the same words, we gather that the same habitation of man, when dissolved and purged by these fires, shall be refitted as the abode of 'righteousness,' unmixed with the seed of ungodliness, and graced with the presence of the Lord for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER THE SABBATH OF THE UNIVERSE.

The last aspect of the filial nature is to the *consummated kingdom of the Father.*

The filial nature in advance of its surroundings.

The nature of this relation makes such a result an obvious certainty: the filial destiny cannot be unfolded, save by the realization of its predestinated position in the Father's kingdom. The filial relation is, in this point of view, an anachronism, since it is immeasurably in advance of all existing arrangements to fulfil its destiny. The filial nature implies a creature-status which for the present is, from its very elevation, isolated, and must remain so until anterior systems (themselves to pass away) have furnished all the requisite materials for enshrining it *as it is.* The filial nature may be regarded as the *fixed point of things* amidst the reign of universal change and progression. Dependent on nothing finite for existence, but only on the will of God, it *awaits* all the operations and events of the Creation as in unison with itself, and destined to march onward and upward, till they finally gather around it in a galaxy of reflected glory.

Epochs in the history of the universe.

Looking on the past and future of the universe, it exhibits to us a *threefold* division of epochs with their correspondent conditions. These may be dis-

tinguished as pre-mediational, sub-mediational, and post-mediational.

Of the first we may be said to know almost nothing. The second involves the history of man, and his relations to God and the future. The third is simply the object of expectation founded on divine testimony, and in no other way accessible to our cognizance.

Fallen angels not subjects of mediation.

According to this view, there were times far back of the existence of our race, when worlds were multiplied, and orders of beings had sprung up, to whose dates of existence our chronology of yesterday is inapplicable. The evidences furnished by geology of the dateless antiquity of our own globe, suggest a corresponding antiquity of moral worlds, and of vast evolutions of spiritual life, ere our own planet teemed with anything but shell-fish, reptiles, ferns, or grasses. Nowhere, then, throughout the realms of being, did *Mediation* exist. Moral derangement had ensued, but without a contemporary remedy. In order to this, a new world must be added to those already in existence, and a new form of life produced to usher in this new era of the divine government. There is something wonderful in the fact that this roll of the volume of God's decrees should be engraven with the history of MAN, and that it begins and ends with the fortunes of his race alone.

All moral issues connected with our world,

Thus, the whole of the mighty epochs of the past, whatever they had been, were bound to a spot of the universe materially insignificant, and the thread of their continuity ran on with the development of a race of seeming disproportion to the grandeur of the upshot. That the axis of the uni-

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verse should be fixed upon our globe, and its revolutions, of incalculable sweep and portent, made to centre here, is the great truth implied in a HUMAN MEDIATOR. Under this system, all moral movements and issues, however distant and involved, take their complexion from THE WORLD, and probably partake very much of the changeful, the progressive, and the incomplete, as seen in the fortunes of man himself.

Evidences of incipiency.

As far as we can see, the moral system, replete with deathless energy, incessant restlessness, and complicated purposes, has not yet reached its goal: good and evil are alike incipient, antagonistic, and relatively undefined. They have not yet assumed their *ultimate* relations to each other: neither the cup of penalty, nor the cup of blessedness, is yet full; both are in the Lord's hand, mixing, filling, not yet handed out. On earth, everything as yet is confused—a medley. In no one point can man be said to be perfectly developed. No great moral problems have been finally solved. Neither the material nor the social life of man has yet received its utmost expansion. Science is young, and even Religion is not far advanced beyond its cradle. The capacity of man and its obvious design, are still unsounded. The surface only of his nature has been played upon or wrought: its great mines of wisdom, holiness, and bliss, as laid up in Christ, are yet answerable to the parable of 'treasure hid in a field.'

Man's existence as mortal is a solecism—his very vanity a thing in which he cannot believe. His philosophy, as gathered from himself and his surroundings, is but as 'sparks of his own kindling,'

with which he still 'lies down in sorrow.' He is not to be judged of by the immediate scope of his faculties, the nature of his acquisitions, or the extent of his experience. His nature is unfathomable by any line which he can twist and mete out for the purpose. His oracles are perpetually echoed back upon himself, and he finds it impossible to break out of the enchanted circle which has bound him and his forefathers together in a perpetual round of monotonous emptiness. Shut up thus in himself, man is indeed 'like unto vanity;' while, in his relation to Christ, he is the counterpart of his 'fulness.'

Its consummation in the kingdom of the Father.

But it were impossible that the present order of things should be lasting;—it points to something beyond itself. Its incongruities are, in fact, harmonies, and its anomalies unsearchable to reason, the footsteps of the divine wisdom: they must end when *mediation ends*,—when the seed has ripened into the harvest, and this vast chaos of rudiment is shaped into eternal order and beauty—Heaven's reflected holiness and love. This is what we understand by THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER—a last domain of things in which the results of all that preceded it are opened out in eternal magnificence, and he is 'ALL IN ALL,' in a sense that no creature can comprehend until that sublime and ecstatic era has been ushered in.

Of this, Scripture has been careful to take note, and to copy out in institutions and symbols, in peoples, and even in personal histories; as if, amidst the turmoil, the travail, and the gloom under which the world labours, the way-marks to this goal, and

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the wells of refreshing to the parched and weary traveller on earth, should never be wanting.

The Sabbath God's rest.

Hence, the doctrine of the SABBATH is one combined with the moral history of the world, and is dovetailed into the religious, the physical, the social, and the prospective life of man. When God instituted *his day*, did he not intend by this to signify, that even with him labour has its rest, and the most stupendous monuments of his power their *ulterior designs* in something much quieter than the *opus operatum* of their formation?

Rightly understood, the doctrine of the Sabbath is the *rationale*, not merely of man and the world, but of the UNIVERSE. It attests, in opposition to the phantasies of Atheism, the existence of all things by One Sovereign Will, which began its operations when it listed, and in like manner, ceased whenever its own purposes had been wrought out.

The Sabbath is the oracle of the first line of the Bible, eternally outspoken; 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' With him, as the Author of all things, there was a 'beginning' and an ending, in utter contrariety to the notion that Nature was an eternal birth of some Power *co-existent* with, not *anterior* to itself—an eternal emanation whose outgoings have no periods of surceasing, and utterly excluding the doctrine of final causes.

God a Being, not a principle.

In the Being who is truly God, and not *a principle of Nature*, we recognise an eternal antecedent to everything but himself; his earliest works, however withdrawn from the computations of duration belonging to creatures, as truly *began* as man himself.

Testimony of nature to this truth.

To this doctrine the whole system of natural phenomena within our reach bears ample evidence, since whatever changes take place within any department of Nature accessible to us, are regulated by laws, and are produced by agencies resident in it: consistent, therefore, with the *permanency* of that order of things to which Creation in the strict sense, gave birth. This order of things, in spite of all the sophistry and misapplications of Science employed to show the contrary, is *abiding*. It does not on the widest scale, or the smallest, progressively *transmute itself into any other*. The original work retains all its primitive characteristics, without being effaced in the least degree. The same starry heavens begird our globe and attract our vision that greeted the first eyes ever opened upon them out of the clay; while, as to the world, its general arrangements, its physical laws, its atmosphere, surface, products, and kingdoms whether animal or vegetable, are, we apprehend, much the same as they were when they were given into the hands of man.

True doctrine of the Sabbath.

Thus, we have in Nature and in Providence combined, the true doctrine of the Sabbath set before us. Creation is the *work*, Providence is the *rest*. Nor is there any extravagance in the supposition that the first of Genesis, though to be understood in a sense limited to man and the world, announces also an *universe-fact;* and that Creation in its widest sense, exhibits its alternative of *rest* as really as does the history of our own world. As it regards man, God taught him by his *position* in the Creation that he was HIS rest. His work all ended in man. The history of the world has shown this truth;

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for neither are the works that prefaced man's existence added to, or altered, from that day to this,—nor has God, in the whole course of his providence until now, superseded man by the creation of any other being to co-inhabit the world, or sought any other object in the manifestations of himself than the promotion of man's weal. Well then might the 'seventh day' be ordained as MAN'S REST FOR EVER, as it was not only the memorial of a work that included his own being, but was the prognostic of his highest destiny in a more glorious creation yet to come, where man should still be first and last.

We need not, therefore, tarry to vindicate the claims of the Sabbath to perpetuity and to honour in the regards of our race—content with its vindication on the incontestable principles before laid down, and constrained to wonder that truths of such obvious force in this direction should have been withholden from speculators on this subject; but not at the drivelling and the mischief consequent on this ignorance.

Illustrated by the journey of the Israelites,

The same doctrine of the Sabbath recurs further on in the sacred story. God is seen once again, to work for the formation of a people by his wonders in Egypt and the wilderness. A moral and political creation is, in this instance, his aim; but still, he has in view his Sabbath, and the Sabbath of his people in the land of promise. He even interweaves the doctrine of the Sabbath with their journey thither, as well as reinforces the institution itself by giving it a place in the DECALOGUE. Toil has its periods of recreation, and travellers over burning sands their Oases of peaceful encampments. Even the ark, when it sets forward, is preceded by the

cloud of his presence 'searching out for them a resting-place.' By 'the command of the Lord' they journey, and by his command they rest. His labour and His rest are the measures of the people's labour and rest. They move as he moves, and halt when he halts. Here, again, we have the doctrine of CREATION and REST, in their direct relations to man. Man follows in the wake of God, treads in his footsteps, and is at one with his course.

and by their institutes.

Even the political institutions of Israel are full of these reflected ideas. Their religious festivals are holidays, and are called *Sabbaths*, greatly augmenting the seasons of rest and refreshing to the heart of the nation, and operating as restraints upon all tendencies to the *labour-pressure* indigenous in thickly peopled territories and advancing civilisation.

Even to the land itself, as if liable to be overwrought, were Sabbaths prescribed, as well as to the man and the beast; while its Jubilee occurring once in a man's life-time, on an average, gave the Sabbath of a whole year of rest and gladness to the favoured people.

To this let it be added, that their land itself was *sabbatic:* it was not only God's rest as a settlement for his people after the toils of the wilderness, but his rest in the sense of his *consummated purpose* in their election and calling.

Thus, too, the temple was the place of his 'rest,' in distinction from the tabernacle which was a *locomotive* edifice, and a memorial of a wayfaring sojourn, instead of an everlasting place of enthronement in 'the mountain of his holiness.'

Turning to the New Testament, the same great

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The Sabbath of redemption.

doctrine is exhibited in the history of 'Emmanuel —God with us;' but in far more marvellous identification of the higher truth with the lower—the divine with the human, in the career of the God-man. Here the two previously separate lines of truth unite, and the fulness of the sabbath-doctrine is beheld in the person and history of Jesus. In him we see a course of incessant labour, and of indescribable endurance, consecrated to the accomplishment of God's greatest work—REDEMPTION. In this there was something wrought out of far grander moral significance than the previous history of the universe could furnish, and more lasting in glory and praise to the Godhead. In this there was seen the very might of Omnipotence in that strength wherewith the God-man girded himself, when in the last gasp which ended this wondrous travail, he cried, 'It is finished!' Thus, he gave effect to an olden fiat, till then held in suspense; 'Behold, I create a new heavens, and a new earth.'[1]

But what do we see following this? The resurrection, the ascension, the enthronement of the God-man. He enters into his glory. He betakes himself to his *rest:* he *sits down* 'on the right hand of the Majesty on High.' Repose becomes his permanent attitude, and his Sabbath in a new and higher form begins its wondrous round—its 'fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.'

There is a sublime sense in which his kingdom in souls is his Rest—'Rest in his love.' The highest view of 'the joy of salvation' is that it is the Lord's own Sabbath reflected in the souls of his people. The indescribable calm, the glorious sunshine, the

[1] Isa. lxv. 17.

divine plenitude of His human soul, alighting like a dove from the heavenly places in the cleft of the rock and the bosom of the wilderness, to make all gladsome and divine, where otherwise all would be dreary and as death's shadow.

The Sabbath of the intermediate state.

And what is the intermediate state but the Sabbath of faith and holiness, entered from the world of toil and trouble—the land of perils and watchings, of conflicts and sorrows? Of old, God had spoken of His rest as something higher and broader than the land of Israel—a Sabbath for the wearied faithful from the foundation of the world, 'speaking in David after so long a time' (as St Paul tells us), of His rest to be entered 'TO-DAY,' and not only when his works were finished (Heb. iv. 7). A brighter Sabbath dawned in the promised Mediator, hovering high over the world through all its ages of sin and travail, and settling in noontide glory on 'the latter day.' Moses had his promised rest before him amidst his protracted and exhausting toils: it was the star of his life, guiding him through the wilderness to the top of Pisgah, and melting into the visions of eternal day, when those of the promised land had faded for ever.

The prophet says, 'They shall enter into rest, each one walking in his uprightness.'[1] And what was the brightness of those forms which seemed to match with the glory of the Son of God on the holy mount, but the light of that Sabbath drawn down from its high font above mortal ken for a moment, to the level of human sight, so enchanting that the disciples said, 'It is good for us to be here'? And what does St Paul say of it, but that

[1] Isa. lvii. 2.

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he who has 'entered into his rest has ceased from his own works *as God did from his*'?[1] And what the voice from heaven concerning the 'dead who die in the Lord,' but that 'they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them'?[2]

The Sabbath of the Church.

The Church, too, has its day of rest as well as its day of labour and suffering; but it is a day to come. Its Sabbath is not yet. Like the Lord himself, the Church passes through labour and suffering to a state of rest—universal rest: the rest of ruling after conquest—the rest of complacency after the hush of wild rebellion, the uproar and confusion of beleaguering foes, and world-wide resistance, at last subsiding into the halcyon calm, the glorious rest, the universal Sabbath of the race.

The millennium the Sabbath of the future.

What is the millennium but the great Sabbath of the future—the wonderfully outspread and protracted reign of truth and holiness—the mighty epoch of piety and benevolence, of rectitude and fraternity, of worship and of pleasure, of the highest liberty and unbounded good?

The kingdom of the Father the eternal Sabbath.

But THE REST, THE SABBATH, is nothing short of the goal of all things—THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER. This is what 'remaineth for the people of God'—an eternal heritage of joy untouched by all measures of good tasted in the antecedent epochs of redeemed life—lasting as eternity, and glorious as God! Everything previous to this is an 'earnest' only of the 'inheritance:' this is the 'inheritance' itself, as the Church also is 'the purchased possession to the praise of his glory.'

This consummation is pre-eminently GOD'S OWN SABBATH, destined to fill eternity, and to reflect his

[1] Heb. iv. 10. [2] Rev. xiv. 13.

glory. All his works, however vast, and stretched o'er the interminable past, are but the preface to this, and lend to it all their wondrous magnificence for ever.

Comparison between the first Sabbath and the last.

The first Sabbath was the memorial of the world's creation, the last of the consummation of the universe. If the first Sabbath was a testimony to the *moral* character of the Creation as the reflection of its Author's nature, the last exhibits the same truth in immeasurably grander proportions. It is ushered in, not by the creation of innumerable orders of beings, but by the public awards of justice and grace, and is the undisturbed, eternal reign of God over the universe in these high and awful glories. In the first Sabbath, man's new-made powers inhaled the breath of devotion and benediction wafted into him with its orient light; in the last, all the glorious forms which Redemption shall have combined in one Church out of the ruins of his race, are ushered into the presence of the Father, and begin the rounds of their eternal rapture amidst an order of things as stable as his throne.

It has been before intimated that Creation as much implies an end as it does a beginning, if it be the product of *will*, and be stamped with *design*. In this most important particular, it differs, as before said, from the doctrines of Pantheism. Creation does not require us to believe in an eternal succession of worlds and works; forasmuch as God was God when none of them existed, and would not be less than God were these all annihilated. Creation is a SOVEREIGN WORK throughout, intended not to manifest one attribute exclusively—that of omnipotence—but those of wisdom and goodness

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equally; and in addition to these, the moral attributes of the Eternal Name.

Creation a means to an end.

Creation, then, cannot be more than a means to an end, and as such, has its plan and proportions, its dates, and its forms of existence, all in unison with THE END. Thus, matter is not complete without mind, nor physical arrangements without organization and life. Creatures, as they are ranked about us, all look to something out of themselves as the reason of their existence: *they are instruments of design.* Men are such: their great national and social combinations make individual life a means of promoting the universal weal. The *use* of faculty is implied in the creation of faculty—principle is to rule mind, mind to form character, character to produce results for the individual, and *beyond* him. All this, and much more that might be adduced, tends to show that the *results* of Creation are looked to by its Author as *his ends*, and that Creation is but his mode of proceeding with a view to their attainment.

God's end all-comprising.

If this be true, then the everlasting exercise of Omnipotence in the production of new works is not a supposition necessary or even relevant to the honour of God's majesty. On the contrary, *his end* rather implies that Creation with him (whatever it may be with us) is a *certain definite work*, which, when brought to its close, with all its results—especially its moral ones—he has deemed amply sufficient for the revelation of his glory. This work must accordingly have its CATASTROPHE at some time or other, dividing the history of the universe into two grand sections—that of its *formation*, and that of its *results;* or, in other words, the *work epochs*, and *the eternal Sabbath.*

Nor is it to be imagined that this view of the Creation as not *interminably progressive*, but as *circumscribed*, at all derogates from the loftiest conceptions we can form of the Godhead; because it must be allowed that even on the supposition of Creation being endlessly expanded, it must still be as remote as ever from an approximation to the INFINITE. We should still feel impelled to believe that Omnipotence could accomplish more than it had done; and that in mere number and magnitude, the creatures might still teem forth into the boundlessness of space as freely as when the first world arose, or the most elementary forms of existence came into being.

As, then, it is impossible for us to conceive Creation to be intended to set forth the INFINITE by *equalling him*, we are at liberty to suppose that the design of manifesting God by means of a Creation, might be completed by a certain quantum, so to speak, of creature-being related to some definite period or periods of his operations. Within this scope, and by means of an all-wise and holy government of these his works—to be regarded as his universe empire—all results worthy of his name and nature may have been amply provided for.

A world-plot to be developed.

For example, is it more consonant to our ideas with respect to our race, that it should go on in its *present state* for ever and ever, merely for the sake of multiplying men to live and die under a routine admitting of little variety or expansion, and without any leading aim to be conceived of as ruling its destinies? Rather, are not these the features which perplex us, both with respect to individual and race-life, and which would make existence a

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blank to us, were there no world-plot to be developed, and no future in store for individuals? Is it not the full persuasion that in these territories of mortal life there is inlaid a magnificent *race-plan* of God, to the accomplishment of which this race-routine is subservient—the source of a grateful and expectant acquiescence? And do we not regard 'the mystery of Christ,' as set forth in the New Testament, in its last aspects on man and the universe, as an abundantly sufficient *rationale* of both?

Elements of the last Sabbath immutable.

We are, moreover, to bear in mind that all the *constituents* of the last grand Sabbath of the universe bear the stamp of eternity. There is in them nothing of the frail and fluctuating, the nascent, or the imperfect—of life based on death, or of the transient, which passes away to give place to something else—of events suspended on contingency—of will in its mixed arbitrations—of faculty without experience—of character without maturity—of happiness or misery but as they flow from a *full fountain*. These are considerations which invest that eternal rest of God and of his Church with qualities inconceivably glorious. Whatever has preceded this has been but the seed-time, of which this is the harvest—of infancy and pupilage, of which this is the ripened manhood—all the wealth of confluence, and all the glory of perfection.

Love the rest of the universe.

We said that the great fountain-principle of the universe was LOVE, and we say that its last Sabbath is LOVE. This is his rest in himself—this is his rest in his universe—LOVE. Was it not Love that filled the seventh day with benediction, after it had made man to be its recipient, as he reveled in the flow of its sacred hours and richer suns,

the story of his birth, the wonders of the heavens, the beauties of his abode, and the sweetness of his mated life? Was it not Love that deigned to talk with him, making the zephyrs to waft sweet speech to his ear, giving to all Nature a temple-glory, and to his position in it in converse with God, the sanctity of the holy of holies? Was it not Love that moulded itself in his clay, and made his sympathies and frailties in Christ the vehicle of its own infinite intensity, and His blood man's ransom-price—that precious tribute of affection for *enemies* which rarely has a man given for his friend? Was it not Love that patiently collected the stray sheep of the wilderness, one by one, and age after age, till the fold could muster 'a multitude, which no man can number, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue'? Is it not Love that shall call them in the voice of Christ from the dust, where else their sleep had been eternal, casting over these long-forgotten children of the clay the robe of His immortality, and putting on their heads the crown of His glory?

Thus everything in man's history, as a creature, and as redeemed, points to the last Sabbath as THE REST OF LOVE, as of a power that gives fulness to joy, unity to a countless aggregate of individuals, and glory to the Church—not creature-glory, but divine. God's Sabbath is MAN: man's Sabbath, GOD.

FINIS.

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